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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

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A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

Ireland is happy in her harbours. Any one who has left on a summer evening the flat and forlorn shores of Lancashire, to arrive on a summer morning in Dublin Bay or Belfast Lough, will not need to be told this. As the boat enters Dublin Bay you see on the north "the auld Hill of Howth" rising steeply out of the sea, and on the south Killiney Hill, "with the spike on the top of it," and the noble piers of Kingstown at the bottom of it; while in front of you the long sea-walls of the Liffey run into the shallow water as the sea-walls of the Porto di Lido run into the sandy Adriatic. In the same way, on reaching the entrance of Belfast Lough, you have on your left hand the Copeland Islands with their lighthouses, and behind them the soft heavily-wooded hills of Down; and on the right hand the black cliffs and stern bare mountains of Antrim, with the castle of Carrickfergus standing in the sea like an Irish Chateau de Chillon. In both Bay and Lough you have a pearly sky above you and a pearly sea below you and a transparent haze all around you, through which you see on each side the little square thickly-hedged evergreen fields, and away in the distance the faint outlines shimmering in the early sun of the domes and spires of a great city. Travellers will always differ as to which of these scenes is the more fair; but travellers will always agree that both of them are superbly beautiful.

Both, too, have a close family likeness: they are true offspring of the Irish land, light, and air. Once, however, your boat glides out of the Bay and between the sea-walls of the Liffey and out of the Lough and into the artificial channel of the Lagan, all family likeness ends. The

cities about you are as different as cities in different lands could be. From between the Liffey walls you see a town which seems asleep, from the Lagan channel you see one which is obviously very wide awake.

As your boat creeps up to the North Wall, the object which is sure to attract your attention first is the Custom House. It is as big as — I should think it is bigger than — the Custom House of London; and it is ten times as magnificent. It always seems to be vacant, which is not strange, since it is ten times too big for its job: the custom duties collected in it are but a trifle as compared not with those collected in London, but with those collected in the little square house in Belfast. A few ships are lying about the quays, mostly small coasting craft; but there is little or no sign of the hurry and bustle of commerce. The cabs which come to meet the passengers from England are all antiquated jaunting-cars or four-wheelers, drawn by even more antiquated horses. As you drive through the city to your hotel, most of the people you see seem to have nothing in particular to do, and those who may have (if there are any such) are certainly in no particular hurry to do it. Crowds of little unwashed shoeless children play about the streets, watched from windows in high houses which were once the residences of the wealthiest in the land, by fat, unwashed, black-haired, blue-eyed mothers: the latter's favourite way of looking out is not by opening the window, but by putting their often comely heads through the paneless sashes. When you reach your hotel you are sure to be received with French politeness and effusiveness; and if you are patient, a porter will ultimately appear to carry your luggage to your room; and in time you will have breakfast served to you in a leisurely manner by a waiter who, if a native, — too frequently the waiters are not natives, but persons with a pronounced German accent who say they come from Switzerland, — will enter into a friendly and familiar chat with you as to the business or want of business which has brought you to Dublin: if it is nothing more than a quest for rest and change, then you will find all you want in the Irish capital. For just as the visitor from a busy land will find Dublin's population the most easy-going, so he will find Dublin's aspect the most marvellous of any great city in Western Europe — north, at any rate, of Venice.

As the visitor rambles about the city he will look in vain for the industries necessary to support its population. As a matter of fact, it has no industries of any consequence except the manufacture of whisky, beer, and biscuits, and the proportion of the population these support is very small; but it has any number of military barracks, public offices, schools of learning, and charitable in-

stitutions, and it is on or through them that its people live. How so many people can live in such a way will puzzle you until you take a walk through its slums. Then you will see it is to a large extent by starving. Just walk down from King's Inns, one of the schools of learning, to the Rotunda, one of the charitable institutions, through Dominick Street. On each hand you will find immense houses, larger and not unlike those in Harley Street. There is not a clean window among them; there is scarcely an unbroken one; every room in them is a separate residence, often without any furniture but an armful of straw, but always with at least half a dozen inmates. The street door is never closed; the hall and staircase which give admission to the dens are never washed; and the inhabitants who run in and out of them—especially the children — are nearly always without shoes and almost without clothes. Well-dressed ladies and gentlemen pass through such streets and never seem to give these surroundings a glance or a thought; and the half-naked half-starved children never solicit them for alms: with both of them this is the normal and natural state of things for the working classes.

In most other ancient cities such sights as these are to be seen, but in no other that I have ever visited are they to be seen in every corner of the city save in a few fashionable streets and squares and in some of the suburbs. But Dublin differs in a hundred ways from other cities. In other cities the best residential part is the West; in Dublin it is in the East. In other cities there is at most one university; in Dublin there are two. In other cities if there are two cathedrals they stand wide apart; in Dublin they stand close together. In other cities, whether there be one or two cathedrals, they belong to the Church of the majority; in Dublin they belong to the Church of the minority. In other cities the Government official is usually loyal to the Government he serves; in Dublin the Government official is usually the one of all men whom the Government has most reason to distrust and fear. If you ramble through the meaner shopping streets, you will find again and again in the windows cheap portraits of the men who fell in the late rebellion, with appeals to passers to pray for the repose of their souls; and you will see men and women stopping before them uncovered and offering up their prayers; and if you inquire, you will often find that these men received their bread from the Government which they lost their lives in endeavouring to overthrow.

Of course this state of Dublin and its people is one which could only be created by a long and tragic history; and it is that ancient history which it will not forget which is its modern curse, and which diverts so many of its energies from the ordinary concerns of life into politics, conspiracies, and

rebellions, and which poisons the whole current of its life. Dublin is essentially a feminine city—gentle, attractive, uncertain, and unreasonable—but it is a feminine city with a past.

Belfast, on the other hand, is a city which in a double sense is a city without a past. Its history is very short, and it is without misfortunes. A hundred years ago it was little more than a village; now it is the largest town in Ireland, with an ever-increasing population and an ever-advancing prosperity. If Dublin is a city with a past; Belfast is a city with a future.

The traveller arriving for the first time in Belfast might easily imagine that by some mistake he had come not to an Irish town but to Newcastle-on-Tyne or Glasgow on the Clyde. As his boat advances up the artificial channel of the Lagan to the long lines of quays and docks, he hears on both sides the rattle of thousands of hammers riveting, and the creaking of a hundred giant gantries swinging in mid-air, great sheets or beams of steel which are to form the sides or ribs of ocean liners. On landing he will find the quay sheds swarming with men and waggons, and piled high with all kinds of merchandise. Motor-taxis are waiting to take the passengers to their homes or their hotels; and as his whirls him through the streets he will notice that everybody he sees seems to be in a hurry. When he arrives at his hotel he is hurried to his room, and when he comes down again he finds his breakfast ready for him on the table. The Belfast man has no time to waste, and he wastes none.

A nearer inspection only makes the resemblance of Belfast to a big business city in Great Britain the more striking. The shipyards and engineering shops which he passed coming into the harbour are the noblest but not the greatest or oldest of the town's industries. Belfast is the centre of the world's linen trade, in which it employs some sixty thousand workers. And as he walks about the broad streets, the visitor will constantly come upon great factories busy with other and newer manufactures. The whole place throbs with energy and enterprise; and it is this energy and enterprise which made it grow and is still its life blood.

Dublin is full of great Government buildings: in Belfast there are practically only two—the Custom House and the Post Office. All the other public structures you see were erected by the people themselves and at their own expense; and some of these, like the new City Hall, the Higher Schools, the banks and the warehouses, are among the finest buildings of their kind in the world. The people are absolutely self-supporting and self-reliant: they do not seek, and constantly refuse, Government aid. Only the other day a Royal Commission investigated the needs of Irish harbours. The southern ports

dwelt much on the improvements necessary, and the impossibility of carrying them out without assistance from the Treasury. Belfast explained that it itself had made its harbour, and would itself determine and carry out all improvements required. It has already commenced these improvements, which will cost it ultimately millions of pounds.

Belfast in itself is not an attractive town. Its situation, surrounded as it is by a circle of high hills, is charming, and its environs and suburbs are delightful; but the town itself is without the picturesqueness which antiquity always gives even to dilapidations. Its chief streets, though they contain many handsome buildings, are still irregular and incomplete. Its residential quarters are almost entirely composed of small workmen's houses—the wealthier (save the doctors) live in the suburbs. These are each occupied by a single family, and inside are in general neat, clean, comfortably designed and comfortably furnished—in these respects differing by the poles from the tenement houses of Dublin; but the constant rows of them, all as like one another as peas, only broken here and there by towering factories, do not contribute to architectural dignity or artistic distinction. The Belfast man does not mind this; and is content to claim that the working class in his city is better housed than in any other city in the United Kingdom, and produces in proportion to its number fewer paupers.

This is very characteristic of the practical Belfast man, who himself, like his city, is, to tell the truth, not over attractive: attractiveness is seldom the distinguishing quality of an energetic and self-reliant people. His accent is far from being musical; his manners are seldom very refined; he is dogged in his views and downright in his speech, but he is not inclined to speaking except when it is necessary. A story told when the Boer War was going on, and not going on very well for England, is extremely illustrative of the breed. A Belfast man who, like most Belfast men, was a sound British patriot, found himself in the middle of a number of Dubliners, who, like most Dubliners, were sound Irish Nationalists. The Dubliners were loudly exulting in the English reverses, partly to vent their own views and partly to vex the Belfast man. The Belfast man made no comment until one of the Dubliners asked him point-blank were not the Boers fine fighters. The Belfast man glared at his questioner for a moment, and then answered, "Of course they are. Aren't they Dutchmen, and didn't William of Orange once come over here with a few Dutchmen and in a month or two knock h—l out of all the Nationalists in Ireland?" But if the Belfast man has the faults of the energetic and self-reliant, he has also their virtues: he is kindly and hospitable, manly and straightforward, and is always loyal

to the friend or leader who is loyal to him.

Somewhere in his 'History of European Morals,' Lecky has pointed out that the Catholic is essentially a feminine religion and tends to make those holding it gentle and courteous, while the Protestant is essentially a masculine religion and tends to make those following it rough and brusque. This may account for the difference in manners between Belfast men and Dubliners; for though a quarter of the population of Belfast are Catholics, it is above all a Protestant city, just as though a quarter of the population of Dublin are Protestants it is above all a Catholic city. But personally I think the difference in manners is due less to a difference in religion than to a difference in race. The Belfast men are primarily of Scottish blood, the Dubliners primarily of Irish blood; and in manners as in character the former are primarily Scottish and the latter primarily Irish. And history no doubt has something to do with it. For centuries past the Ulster Scots have regarded themselves as the victors, and for centuries the Irish southerners have been the vanquished.

However this may be, there is no doubt about the difference or its greatness. The typical Dubliner habitually talks in a gentle and deprecating way. His chief object in life is to be complaisant to every one he meets. Ask your jarvey what his opinion on anything is and he will tell you what he thinks is yours. He is a very talkative fellow, and all the time he talks, if you watch him, you will find he is watching you: he wishes to see how you like his conversation, and you will never get his real opinion of anything, and more especially of yourself, unless he is amused into a jest or annoyed into a jeer.

Two little stories which I have never seen in print are as characteristic of the Dubliner as the *argumentum ad hominem* just related is characteristic of the Belfast man. The first was the comment of a galleryite in the old Theatre Royal on a ridiculous melodrama. The house bore with the absurdity for a long time without expressing its opinion on it. At last the much-misunderstood hero declared to the much-misled heroine, "Oh, my beloved, would that I had a window in my breast that you might see my heart?" Whereupon a voice from the gods inquired in a soft brogue, "Wud a pain in the belly not do as well?" On which the play came to a sudden end.

The other story is illustrative of the unrealness of the opinions they not merely privately express but publicly proclaim. There are no two institutions in existence for which the average Dubliner expresses more abhorrence in his political orations than Irish landlordism and the British Army; yet there are no people for whom he has the same respect and regard

as for the Irish landlord and the British officer. He is a natural aristocrat, and regards with contempt the poor creature who makes his bread by such base means as trade or commerce—with a possible reservation in favour of the "drink kings" like the Guinnesses and Jamesons. Thus when the late Mr Parnell had broken the "yoke of landlordism" and the Irish nation had raised a fund to reward him, the Dublin directors of the movement could think of nothing better to do with the money than to purchase him an estate. Parnell, who was half of English and half of Ulster Scottish blood, regarded the suggestion as an ill-natured joke, and demanded a cheque for the amount. In the same way when a jarvey wishes to be particularly polite to his fare he pretends to mistake him for a British officer—especially if by that sure instinct which he possesses for guessing the exact status of his fare he knows the gentleman is engaged in trade. Once, they say, when a well-known furrier was being driven from Westland Road Station to his home, the jarvey talked all the way, never once failing to address his fare as "Gineral"—a title the furrier took very kindly to. At last when home was reached the furrier handed the jarvey the lowest legal tender, which at that time was sixpence. The jarvey looked at the little coin with rage and disgust. Then as he picked up his reins to drive off he said to the furrier: "Gineral, begorra! Do ye think I don't know what ye are, ye ould boa constructor?"

I read the other day in a great English newspaper a statement that while the Ulster Protestants succeeded well in trade and manufactures, they possessed none of the brilliant qualities which had distinguished so many of their fellow-Protestants of the south of Ireland. This opinion is very general, and very wrong. If by brilliant qualities are meant merely genius in literature and art it may be not altogether untrue, though it should be remembered that Farquhar and Macklin, the dramatists, Sir Samuel Ferguson, the poet, and Master Betty and Macready, the actors, were Ulster men, while a greater than these, the late Henry James, though born in America, was, as he himself told me, the son of Ulster parents. But it is in the severer occupations of life that Ulster men have won honours. Speaking only of the dead, and only of the greatest among the dead, could any population of less than a million, in the three kingdoms, boast more names of the first celebrity than these: In medicine, Sir Hans Sloane, the founder of the British Museum; in statesmanship, Lord Castlereagh, the pilot who really weathered the Napoleonic storm; in war, John Nicholson, the hero of the Indian army; in administration, Lord Lawrence, the queller of the Indian mutiny; in law, Earl Cairns, the greatest English lawyer save Hardwicke; and in science, Lord Kelvin, the

greatest English scientist save Newton?[1] The fact is, when Ulster men make their home among Englishmen, and especially among Scotsmen, they rapidly become denationalised, and are regarded by their new fellow-citizens as old fellow-countrymen. Who at this moment thinks of Viscount Bryce, Mr Bonar Law, and Mr Robert Smillie as Ulster men or Irishmen, yet two of the three were born in Ulster, and the other, though born in Nova Scotia, is the son of an Ulster man, and has a brother still living in Ulster.

As I wrote out that very short list of illustrious Ulster men, I could not help thinking of a pregnant observation of James Anthony Froude. He says (I think it is in his 'English in Ireland') that the real curse of Ireland has been not the absenteeism of property, but the absenteeism of genius. Of the eight men in the list, every one of them did all his best life-work out of Ireland, and not one of them now sleeps in it. In the eighteenth century Dublin in the same way brought into the world three supreme geniuses—Swift, the greatest of British satirists, Burke, the greatest of British statesmen, and Wellington, the greatest of British soldiers. All of these did their best work out of Ireland, and not for Ireland, but for England and the Empire. One only of them now lies in his native land, and he sleeps in St Patrick's Cathedral, by the side of the Englishwoman whom he slew "not with his hand, but heart," and by slaying made immortal. That cathedral among the back streets of Dublin has now become a sanctuary consecrated to Swift's genius and Stella's tragedy.

On the cathedral wall close to their common grave is Swift's epitaph written by his own hand. That part of it in which he tells how he had come "ubi saeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit" is often quoted. The second part—"Abi, viator, et imitare si poteris strenuum pro virili libertatis vindicem"—is usually forgotten. It is true that Swift's long life was filled with rage and disappointments and ended in utter wretchedness; but genius brought him not only its miseries but its consolations. If his political work in England ended in defeat, his political work in Ireland brought him nothing but triumph. This most English of Irishmen was the founder of Irish nationalism.

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[1] Ireland is often said not to excel in science. That is perhaps true of Ireland as a whole, but it is not true of Ulster. Years ago when I was staying at Bonn for a holiday, I made the acquaintance of a professor of the University. I remember his once telling me that the four greatest Englishmen in his department—which I suppose was pure science—were Sir William Thomson (afterwards Lord Kelvin), Sir George Stokes, then Lucasian Professor at Cambridge, Dr Salmond, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and Mr (now Sir) Joseph Larmor. It struck me as odd that he had selected four Irishmen, three of whom were born in Ulster.

The nationalism which he founded was altogether different from that which has grown out of it: it was a protest against the sacrifice of the English in Ireland to satisfy the greed of the English in England—the suppression of their trade for the benefit of the Bristol trader, the eviction of their settlers for the benefit of the London landlord. That protest received the enthusiastic support of the English in Ireland; and, had it succeeded as well in England, Ireland would now have been as loyal a part of the British Empire as Scotland; but it failed in England, and the bulk of the English in Ireland had to leave the country to earn a living, or were induced by fellow-suffering to unite themselves with the native Irish; and so we have to-day the Irish nationalism and the Ireland we all know.

There is on the Cathedral wall also an epitaph which records that "Underneath lie interred the mortal remains of Mrs Hester Johnson, better known to the world by the name of Stella"; but, as its wording shows, it did not come from Swift's hand. Perhaps his love, his memories, and his remorse were too painful to record for the public's reading; but he summed up them all for his own when he wrote on the paper which contained all of her that remained to him, "Only a woman's hair."

Well, well, as this again shows, and as I have said before, Dublin is a city with a past. Women who have a past have usually an unhappy present and a dubious future, yet to men whose fate is not linked up with theirs the fact of their having a past makes them often the more interesting and intriguing. So it is with Dublin, at any rate with me. Of all the cities of the world I have known, it is one of the two or three I have never come to without pleasure and have never left without regret.

J. A. STRAHAN.

EASTERN NIGHTS—AND FLIGHTS.

BY "CONTACT" (ALAN BOTT).

CHAPTER V.—DAMASCUS: AND THE SECOND FAILURE.

NAZARETH and Damascus are wonderful names; and, apart from historical values, each, with the country around it, stands for exceptional beauty. A journey from Nazareth to Damascus, therefore, gives of the most finest pleasure, as the Greek guard of a Turkish train assured us in his most finest English. But if you wish to see Syria at its best, travel otherwise than as a prisoner of war, sitting in a dirty cattle-truck and surrounded by Turkish guards, whose natural odour gives by no means of the most finest pleasure.

Such were the conditions under which we—four Australian officers and myself—came to Damascus. All the way from Nazareth we were guarded closely as a secret meeting of the Peace Conference. Only three weeks earlier a British officer had escaped from Afuleh and walked forty miles before he was recaptured, so that in our case more than ordinary precautions were taken.

We drove down the steep hill from Nazareth in three rickety carts. Each of the first two contained a pair of prisoners and a pair of guards with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets; but H., whose giant height and strength the Turks respected, had a cart and two guards all to himself. Arrived at Afuleh, we sat until nightfall in a mud hut, with the local population gazing and chattering through the open door, as if we were strange animals.

We welcomed the change to a covered cattle-truck on the railway, away from prying Turks and Arabs. In this truck, with coats serving as pillows, we lay on the filthy floor throughout the night, while the train jolted eastward over the badly-kept track. Whenever I looked at the half-open shutter I met the alert eyes of a guard, whose business it was to prevent us from jumping into the darkness.

The next day we passed in playing poker, in looking at the wild hill country of Samaria, and, by juggling with the few French words he could understand, in trying to tell the Arab officer in charge of us just how contented were the Arabs in those parts of Palestine and Mesopotamia occupied by the British. This man, like most of the Syrian Arabs, showed himself well-disposed to prisoners. He presented us with bread and hard-boiled eggs bought with his own money, and refused to take payment.

As always, no food had been provided by the military authorities.

So we jogged on, with many a halt, across the Jordan and round and up the steep winding tracks in the hill country beyond it. We stopped for an hour at Deraa, where a Turkish doctor with pleasant manners and a dirty hypodermic needle visited the truck. Having assured us that cholera was very prevalent in the British army, he proceeded to inoculate us, so that we might have no chance of taking the disease to Damascus. As a matter of fact the British army in Palestine was entirely free from cholera, while Damascus, as we afterwards learned, was full of it. Fortunately, nothing more than sore chests resulted from the use of his rusty unsterilised needle.

Then, just before sunset, we rounded a bend at the bottom of a hill and came upon Damascus; and, forgetful of captivity and cattle-trucks and guards and their attendant smells, I held my breath for the beauty of it. Away to the north stretched a belt of grainland, vivid in browns and greens. Beyond was a wooded area, reaching to the lower slopes of the mountain-range that extends from Lebanon to Damascus. Down the lower slopes of one of the most easterly mountains flow the sources of Pharpar and Abana, the twin rivers. The streams twist downward until they lose themselves in a detached part of the old town, perched several hundred feet above the rest of the city. Farther below is Damascus itself—a maze of flat buildings, squat mosques, and minaret spires, all in a uniform grey-white as if sprinkled with the powder of time, and now smudged with faint rose by the sinking sunlight. Eastwards and south-eastwards stretches the great desert that leads to the sites of Nineveh and Babylon, to Bagdad, to Persia, to the beginnings of human history.

In Damascus, as I knew from Intelligence Officers of the Palestine army, were many friends of the British. Nearly all the population, in fact, were secretly anti-Turk and anti-German. Could we make use of these sentiments in planning an escape? What experiences and adventures awaited us in this oldest standing city of the world, that was famous in the days of Abraham, very famous in the days of Haroun-al-Raschid, and still famous in the days of Woodrow Wilson?

The first few of these experiences were by no means pleasant. Surrounded by the gleaming bayonets and eyes of the guards, who were clearly anxious lest we should disappear in the fading light, we were hustled from the railway to the police station and locked in a tiny room for four hours. Finally, just before midnight, the police led us to Baranki Barracks, a large building used as a prison for military criminals. Tired, hungry, and disconsolate, we fell asleep on the

bare bedsteads of the room assigned to us.

But not for long. It must have been about two hours later when I awoke, tingling all over and vaguely uncomfortable. To my surprise I saw that C. was standing by his bed, and, by the light of a candle, was stabbing at it. M. sat up suddenly, scratched himself, and swore softly in a series of magnificent Australian oaths. R., who had not undressed, still slumbered. Ouch! More sharp stingings came from my legs and arms. Bugs, and swarms of them!

In the prison at Nazareth I had lived with scores of the little red brutes so common in the Near East, but here there were hundreds. They were crawling down the wall, falling on the floor, and biting every bit of flesh left exposed. I lit a candle, and found dozens on my bed.

Lying on the floor having proved to be impossible as lying on the bed, I went to the window and looked into the night, thinking of the one matter that interested me in those days — escape. Across the road was a large camp, bordered on the left by a meadow and on the right by one of the seven streams of Damascus. Straight ahead, weirdly colossal in the moonlight, were two great mountains. Beyond them, I knew, the great desert stretched through hundreds of miles to Mesopotamia. I was aware just how far the British Mesopotamian army had arrived on the way from Bagdad to Samarrah; but even if we were lucky enough to find a guide who could smuggle us into an eastward-moving caravan, it would be almost impossible to make a detour around the Turkish army; and in any case we should be dependent on the help of Kurds or Mesopotamian Arabs, who are much less estimable than the Arabs of Syria and Arabia. No, that plan was not feasible.

I considered the suggestion of C.—that we should make our way to the coast, hiding in the daytime and walking only at nights, and then, arrived at Acre or Tyre or some such seaport, commandeer a sailing-boat and make for Cyprus or Jaffa. For this plan, also, the difficulties would be many and serious. Such few boats as were still serviceable would be well guarded; and even if we managed to steal one of them, it would have to be towed into deep water by swimmers, which was scarcely practicable in the darkness. In any case, a walk to the coast from Damascus must cover many nights. A guide would be essential, as otherwise we could not buy bread on the journey, since none of us spoke Arabic. And a guide would cost a deal of money, of which we had little.

My scheme of getting into touch with the caravans, by means of which Arabs and Armenians were slipping southward from Damascus to Akaba, still seemed the best. But here, again, money would

be needed, besides a reliable intermediary. Money we might obtain by smuggling a letter to the Spanish consul, who had charge of British interests in Damascus. As for an intermediary, we should have to trust the gods to give us one from among the guards. Whatever we did would have to be done quickly, for we should not be long in Damascus. By the time I had reached this conclusion I was tired enough to fall asleep despite the bugs.

The morning toilet included a ceremony that every prisoner in Turkey found necessary after travelling on the railway—a careful hunt for lice in our clothes. The search was very productive, and led to talk of the plague of typhus which was being spread all over Turkey by these vermin.

For the rest of the morning nothing happened, except a short visit from the commandant. By now, having eaten nothing for twenty-four hours, we were irritable with hunger. I made known this fact to the commandant, who promised that we should feed at midday. With him came a little interpreter with bent shoulders, a greasy face, and a fantastically long nose. Here, I thought, is a possible intermediary, and I asked him to return later. During the afternoon he entered softly and announced—

"I am George, interpreter of English. I am friend of English, honest to God."

George was a native of Beyrout—half Syrian, part Greek, part Jew, and wholly a scoundrel. I will not mention his family name, in case this is read by some Syrian who knows him. Were I writing fiction, I should call him a Syro-Phœnician, which is an impressive term but means nothing; but as George really happened, I can only describe him as a Levantine mongrel. Some time or other in his chequered life he spent three months in America, where he learned to say "Honest to God" quite well, and to speak a queer jargon of English quite badly. By reason of these accomplishments he became interpreter of English at Baranki barracks. However, since he spoke French much better than he tried to speak English, conversation with him was possible. He had the Levantine habit of using "mon cher" in every other sentence; and this he applied to his English by saying "my dear" on the least provocation. M., who could not speak French, asked him to smuggle a letter to the Spanish consul.

"My dear," he replied, "I take it with lots of happiness. My officer shall not know the letter, I guess."

The Spanish consul replied by return, and next day each of us was given twenty Turkish pounds—about £12 at the then rate of exchange. This rather annoyed the Turkish commandant, who had himself advanced us seven Turkish pounds each, being our first month's pay as captive officers.

With £80 between us we

were now in a much better position to prepare a scheme of escape. I decided to plumb the depths of George's "I am a friend of English, honest to God." We should have to take him with us, if possible, for if left behind he would be suspected, and the Turks might frighten him into betraying us. An opportunity came that same evening. George had been telling of the starvation in Damascus, of the death from destitution of forty per cent of the Lebanon population, of the hangings without trial, of the general discontent all over Syria, of the terrible conditions of his own imprisonment for sixty days because he had been suspected of being a spy.

"Wouldn't you like," said M., "to be away from this nightmare of a life and in a peaceful country like Egypt?"

"I guess yes, my dear," said George. "But I wish to quit the East and live among English."

"Well," said C., "I could find you a comfortable job in Australia."

"Very obliged. I take your address and write when the war shall be finished."

"That's no good. None of us may be alive when the war's over. How would you like to take the job now?"

"What can you desire to say, my dear?"

There was an awkward pause. We were shy of carrying the matter further, for chance-met Levantines, like politicians, do not, as a rule, inspire confidence. Yet it had to be done. I continued the conversation in French, George's weird English not being a good medium for the discussion of secrets.

"If," I promised, "you help us to escape and come with us, we will give you not only money, but a job for life in Australia."

George's face whitened, and for the rest of that evening his hands shook with excitement.

"There is nothing I wish so much, mon cher," he said, "as to escape to the British. But it is very difficult, and would need much money. Also, I have so little courage."

He went into the corridor to see if the guard showed suspicions. But the sentry—a black Sudanese—was sitting on the floor gazing at and thinking of nothing, after his usual stupid fashion. George returned, and for half an hour we discussed and rediscussed possibilities. He pronounced the scheme of walking to the coast in a series of night marches, and then stealing a boat, to be impossible. The idea of joining a caravan to Akaba he judged more hopeful, but that would mean hiding in Damascus until the next party were ready to start; and hiding in Damascus would be not only highly dangerous but highly expensive. Anyhow, the Armenians who organised the secret caravans must be shy of adding immensely to their risks by taking British officers; and if they did take such risks they would expect more ready money than we possessed.

George was silent for several moments, then announced that he would try to find an Arab, from among his acquaintances, who would lead us to Deraa, and thence through the mountains to the Dead Sea regions. For this also, he pointed out, money would be necessary—and gold, not paper. We could only change our paper notes at the rate of four and a half paper pounds for one in gold, and the sum obtained by this means would be too little.

"But," I said, "if we go south below the Dead Sea, to the country occupied by the Hedjaz army, we can get gold enough. Haven't you heard of the gold at 'X,' of a certain Arab emir and of certain British officers?"

"Mon cher, I have heard a lot of this gold, and so have many of the Bedouins around here. But perhaps I shall not be able to convince my Arab friend that you could obtain money from it."

I gave George arguments enough to convince his Arab friend, and made him swear by his professed Christianity that he would keep secret our conversation. Soon afterwards he left us, still trembling with excitement.

Full of renewed hope, I looked out of the window into the Eastern evening, and speculated on what the god of chance might do for us. To be effective he would have to do a lot. There was, for example, the Austrian sentry whom I could see below, leaning against a motor-lorry. If we were active, on whatever night we fixed for our escape, how could we climb down to the ground unobserved? The window itself offered no difficulties, for it was above the street and on the first floor, so that a few bedclothes tied together would suffice to lower a man out of the barracks. Then, while I was still watching the sentry, a different god intervened. A hooded girl sidled up to him, and after looking round to see that nobody was watching, he crossed the road and disappeared with her into the meadow to the left of the camp. An omen, I thought. If, on escape-night, chance spirited away obstacles as easily as that, all would be well.

Meanwhile the flat grey houses whitened in the light of the young moon, and the river Pharpar radiated soft shimmerings. In this respect, also, chance should favour us. From seven to ten days later, when we hoped to leave, the moon would not rise until after midnight; so that darkness would help us to slip from the barracks, and moonlight would help us as we moved across open country.

Just then my meditations were chased away by a fantastic far-away sound. Somewhere in the maze of streets a wheezy barrel-organ was playing—and playing *funiculi, funicula!* How a barrel-organ found itself in Damascus, and in war-time Damascus, I did not try to guess. All I knew or wanted to know was that across the warm sensitive night air floated the lively

tune; and if you are away from Europe and old enough to remember the famous old ditty, take it from me that nothing will bring you to the back streets of London, of Paris, of Naples, as vividly as a barrel-organ playing *funiculi, funicula.* Memories of ribald versions of the song's words came as a matter of course, and with them memories of the good days they stood for. For long after the barrel-organ had become silent, and only the moonlight and the stillness remained, I was back in England.

Late next morning George burst into the room, with a beaming face and a palpable desire for news-telling.

"Mon cher," he said to me, "I have found a Druse who will guide you. He knows about the gold, and although not quite sure, he thinks he can trust you, as British officers, to see that he gets paid. He demands two hundred pounds in gold when you reach 'X,' and fifty pounds in paper now, for the hire of horses."

I was overjoyed at this new prospect of a road to liberty; but when I had translated George's French for the benefit of the Australians, M. counselled caution.

"I don't like the sound of that fifty pounds down," he said. "Tell him we won't pay anything until we're outside Damascus and have the horses."

We decided that unless we conformed to the Oriental custom of always beating down a bargain-adversary the Arab would think we could be blackmailed for any amount of money. He might even regard too ready an acceptance of his terms as evidence that we did not mean to pay on arrival at "X." Finally, we told George to place the following terms before the Druse—one hundred pounds in gold on arrival, and fifty pounds paper when we were on horseback and away from Damascus. For the present, nothing. As for George himself, he should receive fifty English pounds when we reached safety, and his job in Australia.

Next day George returned from the bazaar with the reply that the Druse would be satisfied with one hundred and twenty-five pounds in gold at "X," and agreed to leave the question of ready money for the horses until we were out of Damascus. He demanded another twenty pounds paper, however, for the man who was to bring back the horses after we had ridden to the mountains at Deras. To these terms we agreed, as the withdrawal of the demand for money in advance evidenced the genuine intentions of the Arab.

"The Druse desires to remark you," said George, breaking into English. "Tomorrow an officer will lead you to public baths in city. When I say to pay attention, observe an Arab who will carry a yellow *bernous* and robe."

And so it happened. We had our bath, and, escorted by

a Greek doctor in the Turkish army, with several guards and George the inevitable, we walked through the hot streets towards the bazaar.

"Honest to God!" said George suddenly—for it had been agreed that this phrase should signal the presence of the Druse.

I searched the crowd of Arabs gathered in the road at the corner of a narrow turning, and had no difficulty in picking out, right in the foreground, a tall fierce-moustached man, with yellow robe and yellow head-dress. One hand rested on the bone butt of a long pistol, stuck through his sash, and with the other he fingered the two rings round his *bernous*. He looked at us long and intently, especially at H., with his six feet four inches of magnificent physique, then backed into the growing crowd and disappeared.[1]

"Don't look to behind you, my dear," said George, whose inability to control himself had again blanched his face, "or my officer will observe."

That walk to and from the big *hammam* (Turkish bath) in the centre of Damascus is perhaps the most vivid of my memories of the city. Everywhere a mass of Arabs, Syrian and nondescripts surged around us, until the road was blocked and our guards had to clear the way forcibly. Bargaining at the stalls was suspended as we moved through the long covered-in bazaar, with its carpets and prayer-rugs, its blood-sausages, its necklaces in amber, turquoise, and jade, its beautiful silks and tawdry cottons, its copper and enamel work, its old swords and pistols, and its dirty second-hand clothes—all laid out haphazard for inspection. Once, when we entered a shop, the crowd that collected before it was so large that the guards took us outside by a back door.

Yet one sensed that this interest was for the most part friendly. The Arabs expected the British army sooner or later, and wanted the British army. Meanwhile they were anxious to see what manner of men were the British officers. We were not a very impressive group, with our dirty much-creased uniforms. What saved us, from the point of view of display, was the tall upright figure and striking features of H., at whom every one gazed in open admiration.

As we passed through the gardens on the way home an *imam*, from the ground below his minaret, was chanting something to a small gathering. On investigation we found a large map of Gallipoli and the Dardanelles marked out in the soil fronting the mosque, with hills and trenches

[1] Months afterwards, after I had escaped from Constantinople and was back in Damascus, I discovered that the street at the corner of which we had seen the Druse was none other than what is presumed to be "the street called Straight," whither one Ananias was sent to find St Paul, stricken blind by his vision on the road to Damascus.

and guns and battleships shown on it. The *imam* was telling the Faithful just how the unbelievers had been driven off the peninsula by the invincible Turkish army. This he did each afternoon, we were assured.

Everywhere was evidence of destitution, starvation, and squalor. The streets were utterly filthy, as if they had not been cleaned for months or years—which was probably the case. The disused tramlines reared up two or three feet higher than the worn road, so that camels, donkeys, and pedestrians constantly tripped over them. Along the principal streets one had to turn aside, every dozen yards or so, to avoid enormous holes. Half-crumbled walls, huts, and houses were everywhere apparent. The magnificent old mosque which is one of the beauties of Damascus was decaying into decrepitude, without any attempt at support or restoration.

As for the population, most were in rags, very few had boots; about one-half wore sandals, and the remainder went about barefooted. Yet even the destitute Arabs were more attractive than the well-to-do Levantines, with their frock-coats and brown boots and straw hats. All the poorer Arabs and Syrians looked half-starved, and we must have passed hundreds of gaunt beggars — men, women, and children. Worst of all were the little babies, huddled against the walls and doorways. Ribs and bones showed through their wasted bodies, which were indescribably thin, except where the stomach, swollen out by the moistened grain which had been their only sustenance, seemed abnormally fat by contrast. So weak were they that they could scarcely cry their hunger, or hold out a hand in supplication. Arab mothers, themselves on the verge of starvation, had left them, in the vain hope that Allah would provide. And neither Allah nor anybody else took the least notice, until they were dead. The police then removed their small bodies for burial, and more starving mothers left more starving babies by the roadside. The Greek doctor told me that forty such babies died in Damascus each day.

The next few days were buoyant with expectancy. We collected raisins and other foodstuffs, while George went backwards and forwards into the city to communicate with the Druse. We now hoped to leave the barracks without especial difficulty. The Austrian sentry below, we discovered, remained inside the doorway after midnight, so that it would be possible to slip down from the window without being seen or heard by him. One night we half-hitched our blankets together as a test, and found that they would be fully strong enough to bear even the weight of H., if tied to an iron bedpost.

A more difficult problem was that of the guard outside our room. There were three blacks who performed this

sentry duty in turn, two Sudanese and one Senegalese —Sambo, Jumbo, and Hobo, as we called them. Jumbo and Hobo were intensely stupid and lazy. They spent their night-watches in dozing on the floor of the corridor. Our door being closed each night, conditions would be ideal if either of them were on guard on escape-evening. Sambo was more alert. He had been a postal messenger at Khartoum, and as such spoke a certain amount of English. When Turkey entered the war, he told us, he had been travelling to Mecca for a pilgrimage, and the Turks conscripted him. Twice he had been in prison, once because he attempted to desert, and once because an Arab prisoner, whom he was guarding, escaped. Apparently he learned a lesson from this latter misfortune, for he never dozed when on sentry duty. Obviously, if he were outside our door on *the* evening, we should have to find some means of dealing with him. We sent George to buy chloroform, but he returned with the news that none could be found in Damascus. Thereupon we made a gag with a piece of pants and a chunk of rubber, to be used on Sambo if necessary.

Then, with these preliminary arrangements settled, they tumbled down like a house of cards. We were moved to a room on the north side of the building, so that a number of arrested Turkish officers might be put into our larger apartment. Our first thought, on entering the new quarters, was for the window. Ten thousand curses! It looked on to an open courtyard. Two sentries promenaded the yard, which was surrounded by a brick wall.

"My dear," said George when he next visited us, "the business is lost. It is by all means impossible to leave this window without observation from Turks."

For hours the Australians and I sought a way out of the new difficulty — and sought vainly, for it was George whose cunning rescued our plan from the blind alley into which it had been driven. He would leave his rifle at the top of the back stairway, he said, then come to our room and usher us along the corridor, after telling the black guard that he was taking us to an officer's room (as often happened in the evening). Next he would recover his rifle, slip down the stairway to the Austrian section of the barracks, and, with bayonet fixed, lead us out of the side-door guarded by an Austrian sentry. The advantage of the Austrian door was that the sentry, seeing a Turkish soldier walking out with prisoners, would think he was taking them to the railway station, or not think about the matter at all; whereas the Turkish guard at the main door would have recognised George, and known that something was wrong.

George could not take more than three of us, as a larger number with only one guard

would make even the Austrian suspicious. He refused point-blank to return to the barracks and repeat the performance, so that four of us might go. C. could not come, for personal reasons that would not allow him to let his fate remain unknown for several months. The party, however, was still one too many. With a pack of cards we settled the delicate problem of who was to stay behind. M. cut lowest, to his bitter disappointment and my regret, for he was very plucky and resourceful.

Once more with a definite plan in view—and apparently a better one than the last—H., R., and I fixed a date for the escape. Having calculated the times of the rising and setting of the moon, and communicated with the Druse, we chose the third evening from the day of our removal to the new room.

Meanwhile we had been treated by no means badly. A few nights of irritation accustomed us to the plague of bugs, and constant searching and washing kept our clothes fairly free from more repulsive vermin. For the rest, we passed the days with poker, bridge, and perfecting our plans. We could not grumble at the food, for we messed with the Turkish officers, who, while not feeding as well as German privates, never actually went hungry. Indeed, we met with much kindness and consideration at Damascus. In every prison camp of Turkey the officers and guards took their cue from the commandant. If, as at Afion-kara-Hissar during the reign of one Muslum Bey, the commandant was a murderer, a thief, and a degenerate, unspeakable outrages were committed. If, as at Baranki Barracks, Damascus, in the days of Mahmoud Ali Bey, the commandant was good-natured, conditions were passable.

Some of the Turks, in fact, wanted to be too friendly. The deputy-commandant invited us into his room one evening, and with his friends sitting around and George acting as interpreter, asked for an exposition of England's reasons for taking part in the war. For two hours I delivered myself of anti-German propaganda, though I could not tell what force remained in my arguments after they had passed through the filter of George's curious translation. Meanwhile the deputy-commandant looked at his finger-nails and occasionally smiled. He was non-committal in expressing his own views; but afterwards, when coffee was handed round, he declared that the talk had been of the greatest interest. This same officer drove us one afternoon to the beautiful spot, on a high slope outside the city, where the sources of the Seven Rivers are gathered within a space of fifty yards. In the scorching heat we undressed and bathed in the river Abana.

We had ample evidence of the widespread hatred of the Germans throughout Syria, both among civilians and

soldiers. Turkish soldiers expressed the greatest dislike and envy of the Germans, and German soldiers expressed the greatest contempt for the Turks. As for the Arab officers, they were whole-heartedly pro-British.

Nahed Effendi Malek, the young Arab adjutant, often visited us with his friend the Arab quartermaster, when no Turkish officers were near. The pair talked the most violent sedition. The quartermaster wanted to be with his brother, a prisoner at Alexandria. The Turks knew this, and once, when in prison for several weeks as a political suspect, he had been freed only by a liberal distribution of *bak-sheesh* among the military authorities. Both he and Nahed were kept separate from their families, while the Turks levied blackmail by telling them that the lives of relatives or friends would pay forfeit for any breach of loyalty. Like all officers of their race, they were now kept expressly from the fighting front, because so many Arabs had deserted to the British.

This very barracks, declared Nahed, was full of imprisoned officers whose loyalty the Turks suspected. Unless they could bribe their way to a release they might be shut in one small room for months, unpaid, forgotten, and living on such food as their friends provided. Then, if their prayers and petitions brought about a court-martial, they might be acquitted and graciously released; but neither reparation for the months of captivity nor military pay for the period of it would be given.

Our own room had lately been occupied by a Turkish colonel who shot dead a fellow-officer. Assassination being a less serious crime than dislike of oppression, and the colonel having been an expert juggler with military supplies and and funds (like so many Turkish colonels, who bought the command of their units as an investment in the colossal corporation of Military Graft, Unlimited), he delivered sealed envelopes to various high officers and officials, and within a week was free.

Nahed and his friend talked savagely of the hunger and misery that ravaged Syria, of the killing and imprisonment of various sheikhs, of their hopes of an independent Arab kingdom, of their galling helplessness against the Turks and Germans until the British arrived.

"But once let the British reach Deraa," said Nahed Effendi, "and you will hear of such an uprising as Syria and Arabia have never known"—a prediction that was to be fulfilled in the following autumn during General Allenby's whirlwind advance.

Sometimes, instead of confiding their wrongs and hatreds, Nahed and his friend would chant Arabian songs of love and war, or order George to translate the stories and epigrams of Haroun-al-Raschid and other Arabian notabilities. Once George substituted a sentence of his own for the tale

he should have retailed for our benefit.

"My dear, I must go to city to see my friend. Soon it is too late, and my officers say no. Please think of some request I can peform for you."

M. laughed, as if in enjoyment at a translated story, and H., turning to Nahed, said, "Kweis kateer" (Very good)—two of the dozen Arabic words that he knew. A little later I asked for and received permission to send George to buy wine for us in the bazaar; and the mongrel interpreter, with a "Mille fois merci, mon cher," shambled off to see the Druse.

We realised that it would be very unfortunate for little Nahed if we escaped, and we should be sorry indeed to think of him in prison on our account. But it was obvious that even if he would, he could not come with us, and we certainly dared not confide in him.

As I lay half awake, early in the morning of May 15, I was conscious that an exceptional day had dawned; but my drowsy faculties could not produce, from the dark-room of memory, a negative of what was imminent. Then the door opened, and with a clatter of mugs and a cry of the German word "Milch!" there entered an Arab milkman, with his tin barrel slung over his shoulder. I was alert in an instant. Why, of course, we had reached escape-day, and we must buy a stock of biscuits for a journey from this dairyman, whose privilege it was to sell us goat's milk, at five piastres a glass, for our breakfast. But that morning he had omitted to bring the usual biscuits—and this was the first of a heart-breaking sequence of mischances.

Throughout the day I remained in a state of high tension. Yet my principal concern was for the lack of self-control shown by George, who walked about with shaking knees and unsteady hands and anxious face.

"For God's sake don't show yourself like that to the Turkish officers," said H.

"My dear, I am not brave, and fortune never visits me." His fear was pitiful.

"Pray for fortune, then."

And George prayed, melodramatically and in all solemnity: "God, what is in heaven, take us to the Arab with the horses."

The thermometer of hope quicksilvered up and down every few minutes throughout the pregnant hours of afternoon. For the ninety-ninth time I examined the packets of raisins, the bread, and the water-bottles; for the hundredth time I reviewed the details of our plan. Between ten P.M. and midnight the Druse was to wait by the station, with long head-dresses that should be disguise enough for the moment, since in the darkness a passer-by could only see us as silhouetted outlines. Soon after ten George was to take H., R., and me through the side-door, as already described, and lead us to the Druse. Then we would slip out of Damascus to the spot

where another Arab was waiting with the horses. We must ride over the plain all night and hide the next day in a certain Druse village, where a hut had been prepared for us. We could buy arms in the village. We would travel without rest throughout the following night, and just before dawn reach the mountains outside Deraa, when the second Arab was to take back the horses. Once in the mountains and among the Arab tribes an army could scarcely retrieve us. We should run more than a little danger from the nomads; but these might be friendly, and in any case the Druse would be our protector and mouthpiece among his fellows. For weeks we should be trekking over the mountains and desert, east of the Turkish lines in the Jordan valley, and the hardships would be very great. Eventually we should arrive among our allies of the Hedjaz. Having reached "X" and paid off the Druse, we could be taken on board one of the British warships in the Red Sea. We might well meet a raiding party of the Emir Feisul's Bedouins near Amman, in which case safety would come much sooner, and we could travel by aeroplane to the British army in Palestine.

After dinner the signals officer invited us to his room for coffee. Having no legitimate excuse for declining, we chafed under his small-talk until nine o'clock. Then Nahed Effendi and the quartermaster visited us, and again we were forced to sit still and deliver from time to time, in response to the translations of George, a fretful "Yes" or "No," or "Good" or "Thank you." Ten o'clock came and went, and two suggestions that we should retire to bed were brushed aside by our visitors. By now the Druse would be waiting for us outside the railway station. Eleven o'clock arrived, and still Nahed continued to draw from his endless store of tales and similes.

"My officer say," announced George, "that the Caliph Haroun compare the breasts of a fellow's beloved to—please, my dear, say you must go to bed. I shake, and feel I must give up. Soon it is too late to leave, honest to God."

Ourselves almost desperate with annoyance, we performed a series of lifelike yawns, and declared ourselves to be very tired. Thereupon, to my great relief, the Arab officers withdrew, with George in attendance. I followed to the doorway and spoke to George when the officers had entered their own room.

"In three minutes you must come back."

"I will try, but I have so little courage."

"Think of the job in Australia and of the money."

"Mon cher, I have thought of them all day. But my heart is saying 'boum, boum,' and a voice tells to me 'Quittez ça!' But I will come back."

He did not come back. Before George had left me

evil chance sent the Turkish deputy-commandant along the passage for one of his rare visits of inspection. When he looked at us George's overwrought nerves snapped, and he broke down utterly. "Ha-ee!" he called. Next, he grasped instinctively at my arm. Trembling visibly, he lowered his head and waited. I backed into the doorway while the deputy-commandant took him to Nahed's room.

What followed we could deduce from the noises that swept the corridor. George was bullied into a complete betrayal. We heard furious talk, shouted orders, and the unmistakable sound of blows with the bare hand. Nahed ran to our room and counted us feverishly. Then came the corporal of the guard, puzzled and scowling. Finally, six Turkish soldiers replaced Jumbo outside the door, which Nahed locked from the outside.

Disgusted with George, disgusted with ourselves, and, above all, disgusted with fate, H. and I paced up and down, or lay sleepless on the bedstead through hours of utter despair. R., the only one of us to make a show of indifference, took a pack of cards, played patience, and said not a word.

The door remained locked until the following midday, when the commandant arrived with Nahed and George, both of whom showed reluctance to enter.

"My officer know," declared George, with eyes averted. "You are to collect the clothes and go to railway. They send you to Aleppo, I guess." I noticed that one of his eyes was discoloured and swollen.

The commandant searched our kits very carefully, but confiscated nothing, not even the store of food. Then he demanded why we had wanted to escape, and who had been helping us.

"Tell him we refuse to say anything," M. answered. And with that he had to be content.

Surrounded by no less than twelve guards, we carried our few belongings to the railway station and entrucked for Aleppo. The interpreter stayed with the Turkish lieutenant in charge of us until the train left.

We took care not to look at George, but I could sense his misery and shamefaced discomfort. At length, for the first time since the betrayal, he showed sincerity with an agonised sentence in French, spoken from the steps of the truck—

"I am mad with sorrow. I ask pardon."

Obviously he expected and hoped for an answer; but nobody took the least notice. It was as if we had not heard.

"My officer has beaten me, and he will beat me again. My face is big with hurts—see."

Still no reply. Then, faintly, as the Turkish officer called him down from the steps: "I have so little courage. I ask pardon."

The appeal went home, and I half-turned my head. But the bitterness of betrayal was too great, and thinking that a

few beatings were not punishment enough, I could offer no comfort and continued to ignore him.

As the train chugged across Syria towards Aleppo we wondered often what our own punishment would be. But still more often I called to mind a futile little figure with bent shoulders, a greasy face, a fantastically long nose, and an eye that was discoloured and swollen, saying with despair in his voice: "I have so little courage. I ask pardon." And I regretted not having turned my head to look George in the face and answer him.

CHAPTER VI.—THE BERLIN-BAGDAD RAILWAY—AND THE AEROPLANES THAT NEVER FLEW.

A soldier out of the combat is not necessarily a soldier *hors de combat.*

Ambition can translate great dreams into great achievement. Misapplied ambition often loses the fruits of such achievement.

Four thousand miles of dislike, distrust, and disorganisation separate Berlin from Bagdad. Four thousand miles of friendship, co-operation, and (except for one short distance) continuous railway communication join London to Bagdad.

All of which diverse and disconnected statements shall be linked together in the tale of the Tunnel, the Tommies, and the Aeroplanes that Never Flew.

. . . . . .

Before the train left Damascus two more prisoners joined the party—W., who had been in hospital at Nazareth for five months, and P., recently captured in the Jordan valley.

Made desperate by the failure to escape from Damascus, some of us were ready to try without forethought any impossible plan that was suggested between a halt and a halt, as we journeyed towards Aleppo. H. and I decided that if the train slowed down we would jump from it and make for the mountains. Then, at evening, we could find the German aerodrome and try to steal a machine, if this might be done against such possible odds as alert sentries, well-guarded hangars, and empty petrol-tanks. Once aboard the aeroplane we would fly south-eastward to the Palestine front. Luckily, perhaps, the train continued at a speed which made any leap from it impossible, so that we abandoned the absurd scheme.

Two rather better opportunities were provided by the officer in charge of our guards—a young Turk who was fanatical and unbelievably stupid. The party occupied two compartments—one containing three prisoners, the officer, and a Turkish soldier, and the other the remaining four prisoners, a corporal, and a third guard. The officer paid us not the least attention, whether to prevent a possible escape, to provide us with food,

or even to count his prisoners from time to time. At sunset he turned to the east and murmured his prayers; and at odd moments throughout the day, with head on breast, he muttered what I supposed to be passages from the Koran. Nobody but Allah, Mohammed, and his fanatical little self seemed to interest him. He had a basket of bread and dried meat for himself—but only for himself.

After ten hours of foodlessness we stopped for a while at Homs, and in broken Arabic we demanded food. He pointed to a man who was selling bread and hard-boiled eggs, explained that we were at liberty to buy from this hawker, and resumed his meditation. We left the train without hindrance, and mingled with the people on the platform. Two of us, at least, could have slipped away, with the crowd as screen. But the nearest point on the coast was far distant, and with neither compass nor a supply of food, to make the attempt in our uniforms would have been madness.

On this station I got into conversation with a Syrian woman from Lebanon, and from her learned of the dreadful conditions in that province. The crops had been commandeered, the cedars and the fruit trees cut down by the Turks for fuel, the population were being systematically starved. Already thirty per cent of them had died of destitution, she declared, including her father and her two children. She herself had come to Homs, because there food and money were rather more plentiful.

"The people of Lebanon perish, and neither God nor any one else helps us." This in a tone of dull hopelessness, as if she were beyond even despair. And even as she said it, many a trainload of Syrian and Anatolian grain was *en route* for Germany.

The second chance came at Hamah, where we halted at dusk for half an hour. A little restaurant faced our compartment, and, still being hungry, we made for it. The young officer ordered us to stop; while a guard, running from the train, clutched at H.'s arm. H. shook him off like a horse shaking off a fly, said "mungaree" (his version of the Arabic word for food), and proceeded towards the restaurant. The Turkish officer continued to protest, but when we took not the slightest notice he joined us at the buffet, where for the price of eight shillings one could buy a plate of goat's meat and beans, with bread and coffee. Afterwards, while the Turk went outside with four of our number, H., M., and I stayed behind to buy bread.

When we returned to the platform not a guard was in sight. Moreover, our train had shunted backward. To reach it we should have to walk over fifty yards. Ahead of us we could see the little fanatic, stupidly unconscious as ever of our location, walking be-

tween the rails with the remainder of the party.

"You're the linguist," said H. to me. "Hop back quickly and buy all the grub you can find."

"Twelve loaves of bread, twelve hard-boiled eggs, and some raisins," I demanded of the waiter in the buffet.

He disappeared into the back room and I waited, uncomfortable under the curious glances at my faded uniform.

"A German officer," I heard one man tell his woman companion.

The waiter found that he could supply only three small loaves and a dozen eggs. With these tied in a bundle I returned to H. and M. The military guard of the station was at the farther end of the platform. To avoid him we had to walk along the line, in the direction of our own train. We intended to dodge behind some waiting trucks about twenty yards ahead, slip over the siding in which they stood, and so to open country.

Then, as we were moving up the line, the mad adventure was made impossible. Two of the guards came running towards us. We continued calmly in their direction, so that they showed no suspicions and evidently thought we were alone as a result of misunderstanding.

"*Saa-seda*," said H. blandly, as he offered them cigarettes; and this greeting disposed of whatever doubts they may have had. Yet the state of funk into which our short absence plunged the Turkish officer had the effect of a shower-bath upon him. He roused himself from the torpor of unintelligent disregard, and for the rest of the journey we were never allowed outside the carriage. Thus, once again, an unworkable plan fell through at the outset; for with no guide, no compass, no water, and the necessity of buying more food, the odds would have been a hundred to one against our reaching the coast. And even if we had reached the coast, it was improbable that we should have found a sailing-boat waiting to be stolen.

At Aleppo we came upon some Indian prisoners. We were trudging along the hot uneven road from the railway station when three white-turbaned figures in khaki saluted from the balcony of a hospital. One of them placed a crutch under his left armpit as he stood to attention. The simple salute warmed the heart, with its reminder that we were not altogether outcasts. We returned it with gusto—as did a passing German officer, who thought it was meant for him.

We were taken to an hotel where transient Turkish officers halted on their way to Palestine and Mesopotamia. Fresh from the failure to escape from Damascus, we were unsurprised at never being allowed to leave the building. Indeed, I was astonished that we had not been sent to some prison, and presumed—rightly, as it turned out—that punishment must be waiting for us farther down

the line. For the rest, we spent several by no means uncomfortable days at Aleppo, helped thereto by sight-seeing from the balcony.

The market-place fronting the street corner below was used as a food bazaar. Each evening Arab and Syrian hucksters arrived with their flat barrows, or erected their rickety stalls. Then, from baskets and panniers, they produced their wares, which they laid out for inspection—loaves of bread, bowls of soured milk, basins of stew, cooked potatoes, roasted meats, vegetables, cakes, nuts, or lengths of flexible candy. Some roasted meat or vegetables over metal bars placed across a charcoal fire. As the crowd began to gather gendarmes circulated among the vendors, looking for such as had not paid police *baksheesh* for their pitch. Having found a victim, the policeman would lead him around the corner to settle accounts; after which the stall-keeper was at liberty to trade for the rest of the evening. Any who could not or would not pay were hustled from the market-place.

Then, until about midnight, were acted a succession of minor comedies, amusing or pathetic. Trial by taste was evidently the custom; and since Allah had provided hands and mouths, why use forks and spoons? Intending buyers dug their fingers into the steaming dishes, pulled out a chunk of meat or a potato, and chewed reflectively. Then they either purchased or passed on to the next stall, while somebody else followed and stuffed a hand into the dish. I traced a few men and women who, by tasting meat at one stall, potato at another and bread at a third, must have eaten quite a meal for nothing. Such an achievement was rare, however, for the hucksters had an uncanny instinct for *bona-fide* buyers, and ready kicks for such as were not.

Over there is a seller of vegetables who has dodged his dues to the gendarme, apparently because his ready cash is insufficient. As the gendarme approaches he picks up his basket, with the wooden box on which it rests, and fades into the crowd. When the policeman has gone he reappears and resumes business. Twice more must he shut up shop, for a quarter of an hour at a time, until finally his takings allow him to pay the required bribe. His wife guards the stall while he confers with the policeman round the corner. He reappears, and, no longer obliged to shun overmuch attention, cries his wares loudly and does a roaring trade.

The candy-barrows are mostly kept by small boys, comically dignified in apron and fez. Useless for an adult to think that their youth makes them easy game, for they are sharp as pawnbrokers, and can tell in the fraction of a second a bad note or coin. Most of them seem to have a working arrangement with some gendarme, whereby if a man tries to take advantage of

their weakness they shriek invectives. The gendarme then strolls leisurely towards the stall, and the would-be cheat wishes he hadn't.

One or two seedy ruffians hang around the fringe of the crowd, awaiting an opportunity for some petty villainy. Presently, out of the crush comes a little Syrian girl carrying a bowl of milk. A much-moustached, dirty-robed Arab follows her into the entrance of a narrow street, where he grabs the milk, drinks it, pushes the bowl back into her hands, and strides away. The little girl attracts a certain amount of attention by shrilling her protests, but the wolfish milk-drinker has vanished. A gendarme spectator makes no pretence at interference, not having been bribed to protect stray children.

Soon afterwards a similar outrage is perpetrated by a similar ruffian, who snatches a chunk of meat from an old woman's basin of stew. In this case retribution comes swiftly and suitably. The Man who Grabs Meat has failed to notice that the weak old woman is attended by a strong young man, who has lagged behind to talk to a friend. The strong young man leaps at the thief, kicks him in the stomach—hard—knocks him down, when he doubles up helplessly, and proceeds to beat him, while the old woman shrieks her venom. The gendarme is much amused.

Through the changing crowd pass the vendors of drinks, clanging a brass cup against a brass can to court attention, but neither washing nor rinsing the cup after somebody has drunk from it. From time to time a stall-keeper slips away for a glass of *árak* in the near-by café, while a wife or a friend guards his barrow.

Between eleven o'clock and midnight most of the traders run out of stock. They pack up their kit, and before leaving bargain with each other over an exchange of surplus foodstuffs for their mutual domestic uses—two loaves for a dish of vegetables, a can of milk for three slices of meat. The streets empty, the cries cease, the gendarmes disappear with their *baksheesh;* and we retire to join the little things that hop and crawl in our beds.

With such sights and sounds we whiled away our confinement at Aleppo. Always there was something to distract us. A Mohammedan official of the Indian Postal Service, for example, provided an interesting study. With only a fez differentiating his uniform from that of most native officers of the Indian Army, we accepted him at first as a fellow-prisoner. But when, at table, he asked leading questions about the Palestine operations, H. winked at me and fingered his lips as a signal. We took the hint, and answered very vaguely.

"Don't like the look of the little blighter," said H. after dinner; "let's watch him."

He was worth watching.

Every day, we found, he walked about the streets of Aleppo without a guard. Moreover, he was living by himself in a comfortable room. While this exceptional treatment of a prisoner did not prove treachery, the circumstantial evidence seemed fairly damning. We became as unopened clams when he talked to us. This was the right attitude—for later, when at a concentration camp, we heard many suggestions that he might be a traitor. Sometimes he was seen enjoying himself at Constantinople, sometimes he talked in railway trains to newly-captured prisoners, sometimes he talked with them in hospitals. Once, in a hospital at Mosul, he was placed next to a wounded officer taken in a recent battle. His assumed complaint was influenza. Yet he was given full diet, and his temperature remained normal, while he lay in bed and asked questions about the Mesopotamian campaign.

A prisoner of war in the East, far more than the traveller, senses the spirit of his surroundings. Temporarily he is of the East. Of necessity his captors regard him as something more intimate than the transient Westerner who, while moving freely among them, lives according to Western custom and tradition; and of necessity the man who is forced to live among Easterns, and according to Eastern customs, is more likely to realise the mental attitude whereby the crooked road is chosen in preference to the straight, to-morrow never comes, anything unexpected and fantastic may happen at any time, and—to repeat an illustration of my friend Jean Willi the dragoman—a man may get married in the morning and be a solitary fugitive for his life in the evening.

So it was with us. The continuity of strange impressions and experiences reacted on me till I forgot to remember that I was an ordinary Englishman held prisoner in what to me was an extraordinary country at an extraordinary period, and became as fatalistic and unsurprised as the Turks and Arabs themselves. Somewhere or other, I knew, we should be punished for having wanted to escape. Of what the punishment might consist we guessed nothing, except that it would probably find us quite unprepared. Meanwhile it was of absorbing interest to sit on the balcony at Aleppo and study the motley crowd in the bazaar.

On leaving Aleppo we knew neither the next stage of the journey nor our ultimate destination; and we were content that it should be so, for a future that is certain to be unpleasant is better indefinite than definite. This time our escort consisted of a gendarme of the "dog-collar" variety and two soldiers. First we were herded into a third-class compartment that was windowless and altogether filthy. Already, before we arrived, it was crowded with unwashed and unkempt peasants, so that

our party of eleven was able to occupy seven seats only. The gendarme, who could murder French, advised us never to place our few belongings out of reach; "or," said he, "we meet darkness and —pouf!—everything vanish."

We liked the looks of neither the carriage nor the fellow-passengers, and thought how much more pleasant a goods truck would be. Germans in the East shared this view, for they always travelled in trucks. R. and I persuaded the gendarme to take us to the office of the station commandant, in the hope of being allotted different quarters. The commandant was polite, but pretended that he could offer nothing better. Then, as we passed along the platform, I saw a clean, covered-in truck, with a few German soldiers inside it. One man leaned idly against the entrance, and I asked him politely if, since there was so much room to spare, they could lend us a corner.

"Ausgeschlossen!" he growled. "Wir wollen keine Engländer."

We were about to move on, when—"Wass gibt's?" called a Feldwebel, as he stepped from the truck.

I explained that seven British officers, two of them wounded, longed for floor-space, so that they would not be herded with odorous Turks.

"Perhaps we can manage it," said the Feldwebel.

"What's Paris like now?" he asked suddenly, and went on to explain that before the war he was a bank clerk there. With one eye on the coveted space in the truck, I admitted to having lived for a time on the *rive gauche*, discussed peace-time and war-time Paris, and even—for one will put up with a lot to avoid travelling in a Turkish third-class carriage—listened patiently to the German's reminiscences of a love affair with a French cabaret singer. This patience was worth while. He took a referendum of his five companions; and all, except the surly brute to whom I had first spoken, agreed to cede half the truck. The Feldwebel asked permission of a German major to ask us inside, and the major agreed.

"But only because you happen to be fellow-Europeans," he explained, "while the Turks are not."

A small bribe to the gendarme, and we moved thankfully from the Turkish compartment. There was room enough for all, prisoners and guards, to lie on the floor of the truck, so that by comparison we travelled *de luxe*. The Germans were friendly; and the Feldwebel, after I had pretended to be interested in more tales of his *affaires de cœur*, offered us a supply of tea, with the loan of a spirit-stove for boiling it.

So, with poker and talk, we travelled across Asia Minor. On three of the next four evenings a certain amount of excitement was produced by Turkish soldiers' attempts to desert when the train halted.

They ran toward the hill country, sometimes fired upon and sometimes chased. Several were captured, several got away and went to swell the huge total of brigands.

In that part of 1918 the number of brigands all over Turkey was enormous. Hundreds of thousands deserted from the army, and of these scores of thousands took to the mountains and wild places of Asia Minor, there to become robbers. Travelling on foot, on horseback, or on donkey-back across Anatolia was unsafe in the highest degree. In every fastness one would be certain to meet a band of armed ruffians, destitute and utterly merciless, who would cheerfully kill for the sake of a pair of boots or a shirt. More than a few German soldiers who had walked a mile or two from the beaten track were killed by brigands. Many of the gendarmes sent to deal with the robber bands were found dead, with their heads battered. Many others were hand-and-glove with them, and gave information of possible plunder. Sometimes a gang would descend on a village, kill a few inhabitants as a warning to the others, and proceed to steal everything worth the stealing before they retired.

We detrained on the eastern side of the Taurus, and were transferred to the narrow-gauge line that traversed the great Taurus tunnel before the broad-gauge railway was completed. For eight hours, on a swaying little train with miniature engine, we moved through the tunnel's half-light, with an occasional interval of sunlight at gaps between the mountains.

The great Taurus tunnel was the solution of the most formidable obstacle to the Berlin-Bagdad Railway. With Serbia overrun and Bulgaria and Turkey as allies, the line from Berlin to Constantinople was straightforward; and already in 1915 the Anatolian Railway linked Constantinople to Konia. At the eastern end of the Berlin-Bagdad chain the line from Bagdad—once Turkey should have regained it—could be extended across the desert to Mosul.[1] The stretch of country from Mosul to Aleppo would offer no difficulties. Between Konia and the line from Aleppo, however, was the great natural barrier of the Taurus Mountains.

The rock strata in the Taurus is among the hardest in the world. For many months it resisted all ordinary drills. The Berlin-Bagdad Railway Company caused various special drills to be made, and then, after infinite labour and experiment, began boring slowly through the rock. The natural difficulties—precipices, steep slopes, chasms, and gorges—were tremendous. Nobody who has passed through the hollowed rock can deny that the tunnel is a magnificent piece of engineering, especially the suspension bridge across

[1] The British have already extended it nearly to Mosul.

a giant gorge on the western slope.

Trains began running through the Taurus, along the broad-gauge line, just before the Armistice; and the Berlin-Bagdad Railway, including this wonderful tunnel, then became the London-Bagdad Railway. Already the rails stretch eastward to Mosul, while the westward rails from Bagdad are fast moving from Samarrah to Mosul. These, when completed, will be the last links in a railway chain from Boulogne to Bagdad. When and if a Channel Tunnel is constructed the railway will stretch, without a break, from London to Bagdad.

Throughout the war this work on the Anatolian Railway was done mainly by British Tommies and Indian soldiers, mostly picked from among the survivors of the captured garrison of Kut-el-Amara. With them were a few German military technicians, some Turkish guards, and many Turkish labourers. As workmen the Turks were hopeless, except when set to tasks that required no intelligence; and even then they shirked. The Tommies, who were better paid and fed by the Germans than were the prisoners working for the Turks, established a curious ascendancy. If it suited them they did four times the work of the Turks. They were intelligent and could be trusted. It was not long before some of them were in charge of Turkish gangs. Several filled positions of importance, with good salaries and plenty of freedom.

Having emerged from the turmoil and halted for a few hours at Belamedik, we were greeted by groups of these prisoner-officials, eager for news of the war. They wore civilian clothes, furnished by the Dutch Legation at Constantinople. Such as had clean collars and hats were greeted with the title of "Effendi" by the Turkish labourers. One Tommy had charge of all the office staff, with Greek clerks under him. Another—an Australian—was actually paymaster of this section of the construction department. Thousands of pounds passed through his hands each month; and the German officials trusted him implicitly. It was a fantastic position—British prisoners of war in the wildest part of Anatolia, as valued employees of a great engineering company controlled by Germans.

From Belamedik we proceeded to Bosanti, where, in those days, the broad-gauge line ended and the narrow-gauge line began. There we stayed for a night and a morning. At Bosanti, also, was a gang of British prisoners. Six of them took us to their hut and demanded the latest war news. At that time we had little that was good to tell. The German drive towards Amiens and Paris was in full swing, the Italians had been badly beaten on the Piave, the tonnage sunk by submarines was enormous. Our one bright item of news was that thou-

sands of Americans were pouring into France daily. This fact greatly surprised the prisoners, who, from what they had been told by the Germans or had read in the Turkish papers, thought that no American troops could have arrived on the Western front.

Having distracted the guards' attention by giving them cups of coffee in the far corner of the hut, the Tommies proceeded to reveal a plan of escape. A party of five — two Australians, two Englishmen, and a French petty officer from a captured submarine—had built a collapsible boat. In three weeks' time they would all apply for twenty-four hours' rest from work, a privilege allowed by the German supervisors every three months. Carrying the boat in sections and enough food for a fortnight they would then slip away, and begin tramping towards the coast near Mersina. They expected to be walking for about ten days, after which they would assemble the boat at night and put to sea, in the hope of either being picked up by an allied vessel or of sailing to Cyprus. Five months had passed in building the boat, the work being done inside the hut at odd moments, sometimes by day and sometimes by night, but always with a man on the look-out for intruders. Tools, strips of metal, and a huge sheet of canvas had been smuggled out of the German workshops.

After making sure that the guards were unsuspicious, an Australian lifted the tip of a plank beneath his bed and extracted one of the steel ribs. It was beautifully made, with folding joint in the centre and clasp and socket at either extremity. He likewise produced a compass and a revolver, bought secretly from a friendly Austrian. Both these articles would be highly necessary—the compass because they would be unable to follow the road, and the revolver because they would be certain to meet brigands.

One can imagine the determination and perseverance that made possible these long hours of secret work on the collapsible boat, during months of careful designing, of filching the required materials, of odd-moment construction under great difficulty, always with the urgent fear of discovery.

I wish it were possible to tell of their success. Some weeks after we left Bozanti they slipped away, according to plan. Carrying the boat in sections, besides food and the oars, they walked in night-marches across the mountains and down the wild slopes fronting the coast. Three times they met brigands, but the revolver enabled them to bluff their way through. And then, when already within sight of the sea, a gendarme found them. Four of the plucky five were captured, while the fifth managed to hide, with the complete framework of the boat. That night he dragged it down to the deserted part of the beach. On

the following night he pieced it together. He put to sea, and for several hours made a desperate effort to leave the coast; but the shoreward currents were too strong for him, and the weak little craft drifted back. He was recaptured, and sent to join the other adventurers in prison.

In the morning, while waiting for our train, we watched the Tommies at work. Six aeroplanes were on their way to Palestine, and the prisoners were told to transfer them to the small-gauge railway that ran through the tunnel. The men seemed listless and unhasteful as they carried the machines to a secluded siding for the reloading. I was puzzled to find, however, that when they began packing the aeroplane sections on the small trucks they showed keenness and even enthusiasm. In the distance we could see them grouped around each truck in turn, as they worked steadily throughout the morning.

"You always as keen in handling Hun war material?" asked H. of a burly Londoner of the old Regulars, who strolled towards us from the siding.

"Sometimes we are, sir; sometimes we ain't."

"You couldn't have done a better morning's work in a munitions factory at home."

"That's right. We done a good mornin's work."

"But, damn it, man, these are *Hun* aeroplanes. What the—"

"As *you* remark, sir, they're 'Un aererplanes. But I doubt if they'll ever fly."

Then we guessed. The Tommy amplified the guesses with details.

"Yus; we do er bit uv wreckin'—sabbertage, as you might say. We carry packages across to that 'ere sidin', and nobody can say as we don't bee'ave bee'ootiful till we get there. Then we open a box er two, see what's inside, and proceed accordin' ter regulations. Crimernul, I call it. . . . That 'ere sidin's a useful place. Aht uv the way, yer know. The Boches don't go there. 'Course, if any Boches 'er near, we resoom legitimate operations till they've 'opped it. Turks? we don't let 'em see neither if we can 'elp it. Once or twice Turkish *askas* 've seen us at play, but they only laugh. They 'ate the 'Uns a blurry sight more'n we do. Why, I remember when a coupler Turks '*elped* in the good work one mornin'.

"Guns and aererplanes is 'andiest," he continued reflectively. "Yer see, when we 'ave the breech-block uv a gun it don't need long to take aht some gadget or other, accordin' as the gunners with us sez. Aererplanes we attack mostly on the longeerongs—those ribs uv wood that runs dahn the length uv the body, ain't they? English pilot 'oo passed dahn the line some months ergo giv' us the tip. 'Course, we give the other parts a bit uv attention—wires and sechlike. . . . No, it don't seem likely as those things over there'll fly fer a long time."

It certainly didn't seem likely. Besides ripping open the fuselage fabric and cutting

through some of the longerons, the Tommies had hacked at struts and clipped various bracing wires. They had prised open the wooden cases, and before replacing the covers had snapped spars, bent elevators and rudders, and been generally unpleasant to the planes. This kind of wrecking was likewise being done, in greater or lesser degree, at Belamedik and other points on the railway where prisoners were forced to work.

The ill-treatment of these six aeroplanes at Bosanti had a peculiar sequel. When the British entered Nazareth (the Turco-German headquarters in Palestine) during General Allenby's final advance, they captured many of the staff documents. Among the aviation papers was a letter from the O.C. German Flying Corps on that front to Air Headquarters in Germany, complaining bitterly about the bad packing and the bad handling in transit of aeroplanes sent to Palestine. As an instance it mentioned these very six machines (my comparison of dates and details established that point)—single-seater scouts of the Fals type—and declared that not one of them was fit to be assembled for flying. Enclosed was a photograph of some queer-looking débris that had once been a wing. The protest concluded with a request that the men who packed these six craft should be severely punished.

Boches are Boches, but Justice is Justice; and with memories of what I saw at Bosanti, I hope that the packers were not punished.

Having waved good-bye to these Kut-el-Amara survivors, who though prisoners were helping the British armies so effectively, we passed on towards Konia. And even as we moved westward from Bosanti the Aeroplanes That Never Would Fly moved eastward, through the Taurus tunnel that never would be a link in a great chain of railways from Berlin to Bagdad.

SIMON.

BY J. STORER CLOUSTON.

XV. TWO WOMEN.

On the day after the funeral Lady Cromarty for the first time felt able to see the family lawyer. Simon Rattar came out in the morning in a hired car, and spent more than a couple of hours with her. Then for a short time he was closeted with Sir Malcolm, who, referring to the interview afterwards, described him as "infernally close and unsatisfactory"; and finally, in company with the young baronet and Cicely Farmond, he ate a hurried lunch and departed.

Ever since the fatal evening, Lady Cromarty had been shut up in her own apartments and the two young people had taken their meals together. Sir Malcolm at his brightest and best had been capricious company. He was now moody beyond all Cicely's experience of him. His new-born solemnity was the most marked feature of his demeanour, but sometimes it dissolved into pathetic demands for sympathy, and then again froze into profound and lugubrious silence. He said that he was sleeping badly, and the pallor of his face and the darkness beneath his eyes seemed to confirm this. Several times he appeared to be on the point of some peculiarly solemn disclosure of his feelings or his symptoms, but always ended by upbraiding his fellow-guest for her lack of sympathy, and then relapsing into silence.

Every now and then on such occasions Cicely caught him staring at her with an expression she had never seen before, and then looking hurriedly away—a disconcerting habit that made her own lot none the easier. So far as the observant Bisset could judge, the baronet seemed, indeed, to be having so depressing an effect upon the young lady that, as her friend and counsellor, he took the liberty of advising a change of air.

"We'll miss you vera much, Miss Farmond," he was good enough to say, "but I'm thinking that what you want is a seaside resort."

She smiled a little sadly.

"I shall have to make a change very soon, Bisset," she said. "Indeed, perhaps I ought to have let Lady Cromarty know already that I was ready to go the moment I was sure I could do nothing more for her."

She began her packing on the morning of Simon's visit. At lunch her air was a little livelier at first, as if even Simon Rattar were a welcome variety in a régime of un-

diluted baronet. Sir Malcolm, too, endeavoured to do the honours with some degree of cheerfulness; but, short though the meal was, both were silent before the end and vaguely depressed afterwards.

"I can't stand the old fellow's fishy eye!" declared Sir Malcolm. "I'd as soon lunch with a codfish, dash it! Didn't you feel it too, Cicely?'

"He seemed to look at one uncomfortably," she agreed. "I couldn't help feeling he had something on his mind against me, though I suppose he really doesn't trouble his head about my existence."

"I'm hanged if I like the way he looks at me!" muttered the baronet, and once again Cicely caught that odd expression in his eye.

That afternoon Bisset informed Miss Farmond that her ladyship desired to see her. Lady Cromarty's face looked thinner than ever, and her lips more tightly compressed. In her deep mourning and with her grave air she seemed to Cicely a monumental figure of tragedy. Her thinness and pallor and tight lips she thought only natural, but there was one note that seemed discordant with pure desolation. The note was sounded by Lady Cromarty's eyes. At all times they had been ready to harden upon an occasion, but Cicely thought she had never seen them as hard as they were now.

"What are your plans, Cicely?" she asked in a low even voice that showed no feeling one way or the other.

"I have begun to pack already," said the girl. "I don't want to leave so long as I can be of any use here, but I am ready to go at any time."

She had expected to be asked where she was going, but Lady Cromarty, instead of putting any question, looked at her for a few moments in silence. And it was then that a curiously uncomfortable feeling began to possess the girl. It had no definite form, and was founded on no reason, beyond the steady regard of those hard dark eyes.

"I had rather you stayed."

Cicely's own eyes showed her extreme surprise.

"Stayed—here?"

"Yes."

"But are you sure? Wouldn't you really rather be alone? It isn't for my sake, is it? because——"

"It is for mine. I want you to remain here and keep me company."

She spoke without a trace of smile or any softening of her face, and Cicely still hesitated.

"But would it really be convenient? You have been very kind to me, and if you really want me here——"

"I do," interrupted Lady Cromarty in the same even voice. "I want you particularly to remain."

"Very well then, I shall. Thank you very much——"

Again she was cut short.

"That is settled then. Perhaps you will excuse me now, Cicely."

The girl went downstairs very thoughtfully. At the foot the young baronet met her.

"Have you settled where to go?" he asked.

"Lady Cromarty has asked me to stay on with her."

His face fell.

"Stay on in this house of mourning? Oh no, Cicely!"

"I have promised," she said.

The young man grew curiously agitated.

"Oh, don't stay here!" he besought her. "It keeps me in such dreadful suspense!"

"In suspense!" she exclaimed. "Whatever do you mean, Malcolm?"

Again she saw that look in his eye, and again he raised a sympathy-beseeching wail Cicely's patience began to give way.

"Really, Malcolm!" she cried tartly, "if you have anything to say, say it, but don't go on like a baby!"

"Like a baby!" repeated the deeply affronted baronet. "Heavens, would you liken me to *that*, of all things! I had meant to confide in you, Cicely, but you have made it impossible. Impossible!" he repeated sombrely, and stalked to the door.

Next morning Sir Malcolm left for London, his confidence still locked in his breast, and Cicely was alone with Lady Cromarty.

XVI. RUMOUR.

One windy afternoon a man on a bicycle struggled up to the door of Stanesland Castle, and while waiting for an answer to his ring, studied the front of that ancient building with an expression which would at once have informed his intimates that he was meditating on the principles of Scottish baronial architecture. A few minutes later Mr Bisset was shown into the laird of Stanesland's smoking-room, and addressed Mr Cromarty with a happy blend of consciousness of his own importance and respect for the laird's.

"I have taken the liberty of calling, sir, for to lay before you a few fresh datas."

"Fire away," said the laird.

"In the first place, sir, I understand that you have been making inquiries through the county yourself, sir; is that not so?"

"I've been through this blessed county, Bisset, from end to end, to see whether I could get on the track of any suspicious stranger. I've been working both with the police and independent of the police, and I've drawn blank."

Bisset looked distinctly disappointed.

"I've heard, sir, one or two stories which I was hoping might have something in them."

"I've heard about half a dozen and gone into them all, and there's nothing in one of them."

"Half a dozen stories?" Bisset's eye began to look hopeful again. "Well, sir,

perhaps if I was to go into some of them again in the light of my fresh datas, they might wear, as it were, a different aspect."

"Well," said Ned, "what have you found? Have a cigar and let's hear what you've been at."

The expert crackled the cigar approvingly between his fingers, lit it with increased approval, and began.

"Yon man was behind the curtains all the time."

"The devil he was! How do you know?"

"Well, sir, it's a matter of deduction. Ye see, supposing he came in by the door, there are objections, and supposing he came in by the windie, there are objections. Either way, there are objections which make it difficult for to accept those theories. And then it struck me—the man must have been behind the curtains all the while!"

"He must have come either by the door or window to get there."

"That's true, Mr Cromarty. But such minor points we can consider in a wee while, when we have seen how everything is otherwise explained. Now supposing we have the murderer behind the curtains; that brings him within six feet of where the wee table was standing. How did he get Sir Reginald to come to the table? He made some kind of sound. What kind of sound? Some imitation of an animal,—probably of a cat. How did Sir Reginald not cry out when he saw the man? Because he never did see the man! How did he not see him?"

"Man was a ventriloquist and made a sound in the other direction," suggested Ned with extreme gravity.

"God, but that's possible, Mr Cromarty! I hadna thought of that! Well, it'll fit into the facts all right, you'll see. My theory was that either the man threw something at the master and knocked him down that way, or he was able to reach out and give him a bat on the heid without moving from the curtains."

"He must have been an awkward customer."

"He was that! A great tall man with long arms. And what had he at the end of them? Either a club such as savages use or something to throw like a boomerang. And he could imitate animals, and, as you say, he was probably a ventriloquist. And he was that active and strong he could get into the house through one of the windies, just like a great monkey. Now what's the history of that man?"

"Pretty wild, I guess."

"Ah, but one can say more than that, sir. He was not an ordinary Englishman or Scotchman. He was from the Colonies or America, or one of thae wild places! Is that not a fair deduction, sir?"

"It all points to that," said Ned, with a curious look.

"It points to that indeed, sir. Now where's he hidden himself? It should not be difficult to find him with all that to go on."

"A tall, active, strong man who has lived in the Colonies or America; one ought to get him. Has he only one eye, by any chance?"

The reasoner gazed petrified at his counsellor.

"God, but I've just described yoursel', sir!" he cried in an unhappy voice.

"You're determined to hang one of us, Bisset."

For a moment Bisset seemed to find conversation difficult. Then he said miserably—

"So it's no good, and all the alternatives just fa' to pieces."

The extreme dejection of his voice struck the other sharply.

"Alternatives to what?" he asked.

For a few seconds Bisset did not answer.

"What's on your mind, man?" demanded Cromarty.

"The reason, sir, I've got that badly off the rails with my deductions is just that I *had* to find some other theory than the story that's going about."

"What story?"

"You've no' heard it, sir?"

Ned shook his head.

"I hardly like to repeat it, sir—it's that cruel and untrue. They're saying Sir Malcolm and Miss Farmond had got engaged to be married."

"Well?" said Ned sharply, and he seemed to control his feelings with an effort.

"A secret engagement, like, that Sir Reginald would never have allowed. And there I think they're right, sir. Sir Reginald was unco taken up with Miss Farmond, but he'd have looked higher for his heir. And so as they couldn't get married while he was alive—neither of them having any money, well, sir, this story says——"

He broke off, and neither spoke for an instant.

"Good God!" murmured Cromarty. "They actually accuse Malcolm Cromarty and Miss Cicely of——?"

He paused too, and Bisset nodded.

"Who is saying this?"

"It seems to be the clash of the haill country by this time, sir."

He seemed a little frightened at the effect of his own words, and it was small wonder. Ned Cromarty was a nasty-looking customer at that moment.

"Who started the lie?"

"It's just the ignorance and want of education of the people, I'm thinking, Mr Cromarty. They're no' able to grasp the proper principles——"

"Lady Cromarty must be told! She could put a stop to it——"

Something in Bisset's look pulled him up sharply.

"I'm afraid her ladyship believes it herself, sir. Maybe you have heard she has keepit Miss Farmond to stay on with her."

"I have."

"Well, sir," said Bisset very slowly and deliberately, "I'm thinking—it's just to watch her."

Ned Cromarty had been smoking a pipe. There was a crack now as his teeth went through the mouthpiece. He flung the pipe into the fire,

jumped up, and began pacing the room without a word or a glance at the other. At last he stopped as abruptly as he had started.

"This slander has got to be stopped!"

And then he paced on.

"Just what I was saying to myself, sir. It was likely a wee thing of over-anxiety to stop it that made me think o' the possibility of a wild man from America, which was perhaps a bit beyond the limits of what ye might call, as it were, scientific deduction."

"When did Lady Cromarty begin to take up this attitude?"

"Well, the plain truth is, sir, that her ladyship has been keeping sae much to herself that it's not rightly possible to tell what's been in her mind. But it was the efternoon when Mr Rattar had been at the house that she sent for Miss Farmond, and tellt her then she was wanting her to stop on."

"That would be after she knew the contents of the will! I wonder if the idea had entered her head before, or if the will alone started it? Old Simon would never start such a scandal himself about his best client. He knows too well which side his bread is buttered for that! But he might have talked his infernal jargon about the motive, and the people who stood to gain by the death. That might have been enough to set her suspicions off."

"Or I was thinking maybe, sir, it was when her ladyship heard of the engagement."

"Ah!" exclaimed Ned, stopping suddenly again, "that's possible. When did she hear?"

Bisset shook his head.

"That beats me again, sir. Her own maid likely has been telling her things the time we've not been seeing her."

"Did the maid—or did you know about the engagement?"

"Servants are uneducated creatures," said Bisset contemptuously. "And women at the best have just the ae' thought—who's gaun to be fool enough to marry next? They were always gossiping about Mr Malcolm and Miss Cicely, but there was never what I should call a data to found a deduction on—not for a sensible person. I never believed it myself, but it's like enough her ladyship may have suspected it for a while back."

"I suppose Lady Cromarty has been nearly distracted?"

"Very near, sir."

"That's her only excuse. But the story is such obvious nonsense, Bisset, that surely no one in their proper senses really believes it?"

The philosopher shook a wise head.

"I have yet to learn, Mr Cromarty, what folks will not believe."

"They've got to stop believing this!" said Ned emphatically.

XVII. A SUGGESTION.

Next morning Simon Rattar was again informed that Mr Cromarty of Stanesland wished to see him, and again the announcement seemed to be unwelcome. He was silent for several seconds before answering, and when he allowed Mr Cromarty to be shown in, it was with an air which suggested the getting over a distasteful business as soon as possible.

"Well, Mr Cromarty?" he grunted brusquely.

Mr Cromarty never beat about the bush.

"I've come to see you about this scandalous story that's going round."

The lawyer glanced at the papers he had been busy with, as if to indicate that they were of more importance than scandals.

"What story?" he inquired.

"That Sir Malcolm and Miss Farmond were concerned in Sir Reginald's murder."

There was something compelling in Ned's directness. Simon pushed aside the papers and looked at him fixedly.

"Oh," he said. "They say that, do they?"

"Haven't you heard?"

Simon's grunt was noncommittal.

"Well, anyway, this derned story is going about, and something's got to be done to stop it."

"What do you suggest?"

"Are you still working the case for all you know how?"

Simon seemed to resent this inquiry a little.

"I am the Procurator-Fiscal. The police make the actual inquiries. They have done everything they could."

"'They have done?' Do you mean that they have stopped looking for the murderer?"

"Certainly not. They are still inquiring; not that it is likely to be much further use."

There seemed to be a sardonic note in his last words that deepened Cromarty's frown and kindled his eye.

"You mean to suggest that any conclusion has been reached?"

"Nothing is absolutely certain," said Simon.

Again, the accent on the "absolutely" seemed to rouse his visitor's ire.

"You believe this story, do you?"

"If I *believed* it, I should order an arrest. I have just told you nothing is absolutely certain."

"Look here," said Cromarty, "I don't want to crab Superintendent Sutherland or his men, but you want to get somebody better than them on to this job."

Though the Procurator-Fiscal kept his feelings well in hand, it was evident that this suggestion struck him more unfavourably than anything his visitor had said yet. He even seemed for one instant to be a little startled by its audacity.

"I disagree," he muttered.

"Now don't you take offence, Mr Rattar," said Ned with a sudden smile. "I'm not aiming this at you, but, hang it! you know as well as I do that Sutherland is no great shakes at detection. They are all just country bobbies. What we want is a London detective."

Simon seemed to have recovered his equanimity during this speech. He shook his head emphatically, but his voice was as dispassionately brusque as ever.

"London detective? Much overrated people, I assure you. No use in a case of this kind."

"The very kind of case a real copper-bottomed expert would be some use in!"

"You are thinking of detectives in stories, Mr Cromarty. The real men are no better than Sutherland—not a bit. I believe in Sutherland. Better man than he looks. Very shrewd, most painstaking. Couldn't have a better man. Useless expense getting a man from London."

"Don't you trouble about the expense, Mr Rattar. That can be arranged all right. I want a first-class man engaged."

The sudden glance which the lawyer shot at him struck Ned as unusual in his experience of Simon Rattar. He appeared to be startled again, and yet it was not mere annoyance that seemed to show for the fraction of a second in his eye. And then the next instant the man's gaze was as cold and steady as ever. He pursed his lips and considered his answer in silence before he spoke.

"You are a member of the family, Mr Cromarty — the actual head of it, in fact, I believe."

"Going by pedigrees, I believe I am; but being a member is reason enough for my wanting to get daylight through this business—and seeing somebody swing for it!"

"What if you made things worse?"

"Worse! How could they be?"

"Mr Cromarty, I am the Procurator-Fiscal in charge of this case. But I am also lawyer and factor to the Cromarty family, and my father was before me. If there was evidence enough—clear and proper evidence—to convict any person of this crime, it would be my duty as Procurator-Fiscal to convict them. But there is no definite evidence, as you know yourself. All we can do, if we push this matter too far, is to make a family scandal public. Are you, as the head of the Cromarty family, and I as their factor, to do this?"

It was difficult to judge with what feelings Ned Cromarty heard this deliberate statement and appeal. His mouth was as hard as the lawyer's and his eye revealed nothing.

"Then you propose to hush the thing up?"

"I said nothing about hushing up. I propose to wait till I get some *evidence*, Mr Cromarty. It is a little difficult perhaps for a layman to realise what evidence means,

but I can tell you—and any lawyer or any detective would tell you—we have nothing that can be called evidence yet."

"And you won't get any till you call in somebody a out above Sutherland."

"The scent is too cold by this time——"

"Who let it cool?" interrupted Ned.

For a moment the lawyer's eyes looked unpleasant.

"Every effort was made to find a clue—by yourself as well as by the police. And let me tell you, Mr Cromarty, that our efforts have not been as fruitless as you seem to think."

"What have we discovered?"

"In the first place, that there was no robbery committed and no sign of anybody having entered the house from the outside."

Ned shook his head.

"That's a lot too strong. I believe the man *did* come in by the window."

"You admit there is no proof?"

"Sure," said Ned candidly. "I quite admit there is no proof of anything—yet."

"No robbery, no evidence of any one having come in by the window——"

"No proof," corrected Ned. "I maintain that the window being unsnibbed and that mud on the floor, and the table near the window being upset, is evidence—but not proof positive."

Simon's patience had by this time become exemplary. His only wish seemed to be to convince by irresistible argument this obstinate objector.

"Well, let us leave it at that. Suppose there be a possibility that entry was actually made by the window. It is a bare possibility against the obvious and easy entrance by the door—near which, remember, the body was found. Then, as I have pointed out, there was no robbery, and not a trace has been found of anybody outside that house with a motive for the crime."

"Except me."

"Unless you care to except yourself. But neither you nor the police have found any bad characters in the place."

"That's true enough," Ned admitted reluctantly.

"On the other hand, there were within the house two people with a very strong motive for committing the crime."

"I deny that!" cried Ned with a sudden gleam of ferocity in his eye that seemed to disconcert the lawyer.

"Deny it? You can scarcely deny that two young people, in love with one another and secretly engaged, with no money, and no chance of getting married, stood to gain everything they wanted by a death that gave them freedom to marry, a baronetcy, £1000 a year, and £2000 in cash besides?"

"Damn it, Mr Rattar, is the fact that a farmer benefits by a shower any evidence that he has turned on the rain?"

"I have repeatedly said, Mr Cromarty, that there is no definite evidence to convict

anybody. But nothing would have been easier than making an end of Sir Reginald Cromarty, to anybody inside that house whom he would never suspect till they struck the blow. All the necessary conditions are fulfilled by this view of the case, whereas every other view—every other view, mind you, Mr Cromarty—is confronted with these difficulties: no robbery, no definite evidence of entry, no explanation of Sir Reginald's extraordinary silence when the man appeared, no bad characters in the neighbourhood, and, above all, no motive."

At the end of this speech Simon shut his mouth tight and leaned back in his chair. For a moment it seemed as though Ned Cromarty was impressed by the lawyer's view of the case. But, when he replied, his voice, though deliberate, had a fighting ring in it, and his single eye a fighting light.

"Then you propose to leave this young couple under the most damnable cloud of suspicion that a man and a woman could lie under—simply leave 'em there, and let that be the end of it?"

Simon seemed to be divided between distaste for this way of putting the case, and anxiety still to convince his visitor.

"I propose to avoid the painful family scandal which further disclosures and more publicity would almost certainly bring about, so long as I am justified as Procurator-Fiscal in taking this course; and until I get more evidence, I am not only justified but forced to take this course."

Ned suddenly jumped to his feet.

"I'm no lawyer," said he, "but to me you seem to be arguing in the damnedest circle I ever met. You won't do anything because you can't get more evidence. And you won't look for more evidence because you don't want to do anything."

There was more than a hint of temper in Simon's eye, and his answer was rapped out sharply.

"I certainly do not *want* to cause a family scandal. I haven't said all I could say about Sir Malcolm if I were pressed."

"Why not?"

"I've told you. Suspicion is not evidence, but if I do get evidence, those who will suffer by it had better beware!"

Ned turned at the door and surveyed him with a cool and caustic eye.

"That's talk," he said, "and something has got to be *done*."

He was gone, and Simon Rattar was left frowning at the closed door behind him. The frown remained, but became now rather thoughtful than indignant. Then he sprang up and began to pace the floor, deliberately at first, and then more rapidly and with increasing agitation.

XVIII. £1200.

Ned Cromarty had returned home and was going upstairs, when he heard a voice cry—

"Ned!"

The ancient stone stair, spiralling up round the time-worn pillar that seemed to have no beginning or end, gave at intervals on to doors which looked like apertures in a cliff. Through one of these he turned, and at the end of a brief passage came to his sister's sitting-room. In that medieval setting of ponderous stone, it looked almost fantastic in its daintiness. It was a small room of many cushions and many colours, its floor covered with the softest rugs and its walls with innumerable photographs, largely of country houses where Miss Cromarty had visited.

Evidently she was a lady accustomed to a comfortable life in her roving days, and her sitting-room seemed to indicate very distinctly that she proposed to live up to this high standard permanently.

"Oh, Neddy dear, I want to talk to you about something," she began in her brisk way and with her brightest smile.

Her brother, though of a simple nature, was by this time aware that when he was termed "Neddy dear" the conversation was apt to turn on Miss Cromarty's requirements.

"Well," said he, "how much is the cheque to be this time?"

"How clever you're getting!" she laughed. "But it isn't a cheque I want this time. It's only a motor-car."

He looked at her doubtfully for a moment.

"Pulling my leg, or a real car?"

"Real car, of course—nice one, too!"

"But, my dear girl, we've just put down our car. You agreed it was necessary."

"I agreed then; but it isn't necessary now."

"Have you come into a fortune? I haven't!"

"You've come into £1200."

Again he looked at her, and this time his expression changed.

"That's only a debt wiped out."

"Well, and your great argument for economy was that you had to pay back that debt. Now you haven't. See, Neddy dear?"

Her brother began to shake his head, and her smile became a little less bright.

"I don't want to get my affairs into a tangle again just yet."

"But they weren't in a bad tangle. Cancelling that debt makes us absolutely all right again. It's absurd for people like us not to have a car. Look at the distances from our neighbours! One can't go anywhere. I'll undertake to keep down the household expenses if you get the car."

Her brother frowned out of the window.

"No," he said, "it's too soon to get a car again."

"But you told me you had got part of that £1200 in hand, and hoped to make up the rest very soon. What are you going to do with the money now?"

He glanced at her over his shoulder for an instant, and then his mouth assumed a grim and obstinate look she knew too well.

"I may need the money," he said briefly. "And I'm not much in the mood at this moment for buying things."

Behind his back Lilian made a little grimace. Then, in a tone of sisterly expostulation, she said—

"You are worrying too much over this affair, Ned. You've done all you can——"

He interrupted her brusquely—

"And it's dashed little! What have I actually done? Nothing! One needs a better man than me."

"Well, there's your friend Silent Simon, and all the police——"

"A fat lot of good they are!" said Ned.

His sister looked a little surprised at his unusual shortness of temper. To her he was very rarely like this.

"You need a good day's shooting to take your mind off it for a little," she suggested.

He turned upon her hotly.

"Do you know the story that's going about, Lilian?"

"Sir Malcolm and the Farmond girl? Oh, rather," she nodded.

"Is that how it strikes you?"

Lilian Cromarty jumped. There was something very formidable in her brother's voice.

"My dear Ned, don't frighten me! Eat me if you like, but eat me quietly. I didn't say I believed the story."

"I hope not," he said in the same grim tone; "but do you mean to say it doesn't strike you as the damnedest slander ever spread?"

"Between myself I hadn't called it the 'damnedest' anything. But how do I know whether it's a slander?"

"You actually think it might conceivably be true?"

She shrugged her well-gowned shoulders.

"I never could stand Malcolm Cromarty—a conceited little jackanapes. He hasn't a penny, and he was head over ears in debt."

It was his turn to start.

"Was he?"

"Oh, rather! Didn't you know? Owed money everywhere."

"But such a crime as that!"

"A man with ties and hair like his is capable of anything. You know quite well yourself he is a rotter."

"Anyhow, you can't believe Cicely Farmond had anything to do with it?"

Again she shrugged her shoulders.

"My dear Ned, I'm not a detective. A pretty face is no proof a woman is a saint. I told you before that there was

generally something in the blood in those cases."

As he stared at her, it seemed as though her words had indeed rushed back to his memory and that they hit him hard.

"People don't say that, do they?" he asked in a low voice.

"Really, Ned, I don't know everything people say; but they are not likely to overlook much in such a case."

He stood for a moment in silence.

"She—I mean, they've both got to be cleared!" he said, and strode out of the room.

XIX. THE EMPTY COMPARTMENT.

It was on this same evening that Superintendent Sutherland was almost rewarded for his vigilance by having something distinctly suspicious to report. As it happened, it proved a disappointing incident, but it gave the Superintendent something to think about.

He was going a few stations down the line to investigate a rumour of a suspicious person seen in that neighbourhood. It was a vague and improbable rumour, and the Superintendent was setting out merely as a matter of form, and to demonstrate his vigilance and almost abnormal sense of duty. Darkness had already fallen for an hour or two when he strode with dignified gait down the platform, exchanging a greeting with an acquaintance or two, till he came to the front carriage of the train. He threw open the door of the rear compartment, saw that it was empty, and was just going to enter when, glancing over his shoulder, he perceived his own cousin, Mr MacAlister, upon the platform. Closing the door, he stepped down again and greeted him.

Mr MacAlister hailed him with even more than usual friendliness, and after a few polite preliminaries, drew him insidiously towards the far side of the platform. An intelligent, inveterate, and persevering curiosity was Mr MacAlister's dominating characteristic, and as soon as he had got his distinguished kinsman out of earshot of the herd, he inquired in a hushed voice—

"And what's doing aboot the murder noo, George?"

The Superintendent pursed his lips and shook his head.

"Aye, man, yon's a proper puzzle," said he.

"But you'll have gotten a guid idea whae's din it by noo, George?" said Mr MacAlister persuasively.

"Weel," admitted the Superintendent, "we maybe have our notions, but there's no evidence yet, Robbie; that's the fair truth. As the Fiscal says, there's no evidence."

"I'd like fine to hae a crack

wi' you aboot it, George," sighed Mr MacAlister. "I may tell you I've notions of ma own — no bad notions either."

"Well," said the Superintendent, moving off, "I'd have enjoyed a crack myself if it wasna that I've got to be off by this train."

"Man!" cried his kinsman, "I'm for off by her mysel'! Come on, we'll hae our crack yet."

The tickets had already been taken, and the doors were closed as the two recrossed the platform.

"This carriage is empty," said the Superintendent, and threw open the door of the same compartment he had almost entered before.

But it was not empty now. In one of the farther corners sat a man wrapped in a dark-coloured ulster. A black felt hat was drawn down over his eyes, and his muffled face was resting on his hand. So much the Superintendent saw in the brief moment during which he stood at the open door, and it struck him at once that the man must be suffering from toothache. And then his cousin caught him by the arm and drew him back.

"Here, man, the carriage next door is empty!" cried he, and the Superintendent closed the door and followed him.

It was scarcely more than a minute later when the whistle blew and they were off, and Mr MacAlister took out his pipe and prepared himself to receive official confidences. But the miles went by, and though he plied his questions incessantly and skilfully, no confidences were forthcoming. The Superintendent, in fact, had something else to think about. All at once he asked abruptly—

"Robbie, did ye see yon man next door sitting with his face in his hands?"

"Aye," said Mr MacAlister, "I noticed the man."

"Did ye ken who he was?"

"No," said Mr MacAlister, "I did not."

"Had ye seen him on the platform?"

"No," said Mr MacAlister, "I had not."

"I didna see him myself," said the Superintendent musingly. "It seems funny-like, a man dressed like yon, and with his face wrapped up, too—and a man, forbye, that's a stranger to us both, coming along the platform and getting into that carriage, and me not noticing him. I'm not used not to notice people, Robbie."

"It's your business, George," said Mr MacAlister; and then, as he gazed at his cousin's thoughtful face, his own grew suddenly animated.

"You're not thinking he's to dae wi' the murder, are you?" he cried.

"I'm not sure what to think till I've had another look into yon carriage," said the Superintendent cautiously.

"We're slowing doon the noo!" cried Mr MacAlister. "God, George, I'll come and hae a look wi' you!"

The train was hardly along the platform before the Superintendent was out, with Mr MacAlister after him, and the door of the next compartment was open almost as soon as the train was at rest. Never had the Superintendent been more vigilant, and never had his honest face looked blanker.

"God! It's empty!" he murmured.

"God save us!" murmured Mr MacAlister, and then he was visited by an inspiration which struck his relative afterwards as one of the unhappiest he had ever suffered from. "This canna be the richt carriage!" he cried. "Come on, Geordie, let's hae a look in the ithers!"

By the time they had looked into all the compartments of the carriage, the guard was waving his flag, and the two men climbed hurriedly in again. The brooding silence of the Superintendent infected even Mr MacAlister, and neither spoke for several minutes. Then the Superintendent said bitterly—

"It was you hurrying me off to look in thae other carriages, Robbie!"

"What was?" inquired Mr MacAlister a little nervously.

"I ought to have stopped and looked under the seats!"

Mr MacAlister shook his head and declared firmly—

"There was naething under the seats. I could see that fine. And, onyhow, we can hae a look at the next stop."

"As if he'll be waiting for us, now he kens we're looking for him!"

"But there was naething there!" persisted Mr MacAlister.

"Then what's come over the man? Here were we sitting next the platform. He can't have got out afore we started, or we'd have seen him. Folks don't disappear into the air! I'll try under the seats, though I doubt the man will have been up and out while we were wasting our time in yon other carriages."

At the next station they searched that mysterious compartment earnestly and thoroughly, but there was not a sign of the muffled stranger, under the seats or anywhere else. Again the Superintendent was silent for a space, and then he said confidentially—

"I'm just wondering if it's worth while reporting the thing, Robbie. The Fiscal might have a kin' of unpleasant way of looking at it. Besides, there's really naething to report. Anyhow, I'll think it over. And that being the case, the less said the better. I can tell ye all that's known about the case, Robbie, knowing that you'll be discreet."

"Oh, you can trust me," said Mr MacAlister earnestly; "I'll no' breathe a word o' yon man. Weel, now, you were saying you'd tell me the haill story."

By this judicious arrangement Mr MacAlister got his money's worth of sensational

disclosures, and the Superintendent was able to use his discretion and think the incident over. He thought over it very hard, and finally decided that he was demonstrating his vigilance quite sufficiently without mentioning the trifling mystery of the empty compartment.

XX. THE SPORTING VISITOR.

In summer and autumn visitors were not uncommon in this remote countryside; mostly shooting or fishing people who rented the country houses, raised the local prices, and were described by the tradesmen as benefiting the county greatly. But in late autumn and winter this fertilising stream ceased to flow, and when the trains from the south crawled in, the porters and the boots from the hotels resigned themselves to welcoming a merely commercial form of traveller.

It was therefore with considerable pleasure and surprise that they observed one afternoon an unmistakably sporting gentleman descend from a first-class compartment and survey them with a condescending yet affable eye.

"Which is the best of these hotels?" he demanded with an amiable smile, as he surveyed through a single eyeglass the names on the caps of the various boots.

His engaging air disarmed the inquiry of embarrassment, and even when he finally selected the King's Arms Hotel, the other boots merely felt regret that they had not secured so promising a client. His luggage confirmed the first favourable impression. It included a gun-case, a bag of golf clubs, and one or two handsome leather articles. Evidently he meant to make more than a passing visit, and as he strolled down the platform, his leisurely nonchalant air and something even in the way in which he smoked his cigarette in its amber holder, suggested a gentleman who having arrived here was in no hurry to move on. On a luggage label the approving boots noted the name of "F. T. Carrington."

When he arrived at the King's Arms, Mr Carrington continued to produce favourable impressions. He was a young man, apparently a little over thirty, above middle height, with a round, ingenuous, very agreeable face, smooth fair hair, a little neatly trimmed moustache, and a monocle that lent just the necessary touch of distinction to what might otherwise have been a too good-humoured physiognomy. His tweed suit was fashionably cut and of a distinctly sportive pattern, and he wore a pair of light spats. In short, there could be no mistaking him for anything but a gentleman of position and leisure, with strong sporting

proclivities, and his manner amply confirmed this. It was in fact almost indolent in its leisurely ease.

Miss Peterkin, the capable manageress of the King's Arms, was at first disposed to think Mr Carrington a trifle too superior, and, as she termed it, "la-de-da," but a very few minutes conversation with the gentleman completely reassured her. He was so polite and so good-humoured and so ready to be pleased with everything he saw and anything she suggested, that they became firm friends within ten minutes of his arrival, and after Mr Carrington had disposed of his luggage in the bedroom and private sitting-room which he engaged, and partaken of a little dinner, she found herself welcoming him into her own sitting-room, where a few choice spirits nightly congregated.

It is true that these spirits, though choice, were hardly of what she called Mr Carrington's "class," but then in all her experience she had never met a gentleman of such fashion and such a superior air, who adapted himself so charmingly to any society. In fact, "charming" was the very adjective for him, she decided.

About his own business he was perfectly frank. He had heard of the sporting possibilities of the county, and had come to look out for a bit of fishing or shooting—preferably fishing, for it seemed he was an enthusiastic angler. Of course it was too late in the season for any fishing this year, but he was looking ahead, as he preferred to see things for himself instead of trusting to an agent's description. He had brought his gun just on the chance of getting a day somewhere, and his clubs in case there happened to be a golf links. In short, he seemed evidently to be a young man of means who lived for sport; and what other question could one ask about such a satisfactory type of visitor? Absolutely none, in Miss Peterkin's opinion.

As a matter of fact, she found very early in the evening, and continued to find thereafter, that the most engaging feature of Mr Carrington's character was the interest he took in other people's business, so that the conversation very quickly strayed away from his own concerns — and remained away. It was not that he showed any undue curiosity; far from it. He was simply so sympathetic and such a good listener, and put questions that showed he was following everything you said to him in a way that really very few people did. And, moreover, in spite of his engaging frankness, there was an indefinable air of discretion about him that made one feel safe to tell him practically everything. She herself told him the sad story of her brother in Australia (a tale which as a rule she told only to her special intimates) before he had been in her room half an hour.

But with the arrival of three or four choice spirits, the conversation became more general, and it was naturally not long before it turned on the greatest local sensation and mystery within the memory of man — the Cromarty murder. Mr Carrington's surprise was extreme when he realised that he was actually in the county where the tragedy had occurred—within a very few miles of the actual spot, in fact. Of course he had read about it in the papers, but only cursorily, it seemed, and he had no idea he was coming into the identical district that had acquired such a sinister notoriety.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed more than once when he had made this discovery. "I say, how interesting!"

"Oh," said Miss Peterkin with becoming pride, "we are getting quite famous, I can assure you, Mr Carrington."

"Rather so!" cried he. "I've read quite a lot about this Carnegie case——"

"Cromarty," corrected one of the spirits.

"Cromarty, of course, I mean! I'm rather an ass at names, I'm afraid." The young man smiled brightly, and all the spirits sympathised. "Oh yes, I've seen it reported in the papers. And now, to think here I am in the middle of it, by George! How awfully interesting! I say, Miss Peterkin, what about these gentlemen having another wee droppie with me, all round, just to celebrate the occasion?"

With such an appreciative and hospitable audience, Miss Peterkin and the choice spirits spent a long and delightful evening in retailing every known circumstance of the drama, and several that were certainly unknown to the authorities. He was vastly interested, though naturally very shocked, to hear who was commonly suspected of the crime.

"Do you mean to say his own heir — and a young girl like that——? By Jove, I say, how dreadful!" he exclaimed; and in fact he would hardly believe such a thing conceivable until all the choice spirits in turn had assured him that there was practically no doubt about it.

The energetic part played by Mr Simon Rattar in unravelling the dark skein, or at least in trying to, was naturally described at some length, and Mr Carrington showed his usual sympathetic and, one might almost say, entranced appreciation of the many facts told him concerning that local celebrity.

Finally Miss Peterkin insisted on getting out the back numbers of the local paper giving the full details of the case, and with many thanks he took these off to read before he went to bed.

"But mind you don't give yourself the creeps and keep yourself from going to sleep, Mr Carrington!" she warned him with her last words.

"By Jove, that's an awful thought!" he exclaimed, and then his eyes twinkled. "Send me up another whisky-and-soda to cure the creeps!" said he.

Miss Peterkin thought he was quite one of the pleasantest, and promised to be one of the most profitable, gentlemen she had met for a very long time.

Next morning he assured her he had kept the creeps at bay sufficiently to enjoy an excellent night's sleep in a bed that did the management credit. In fact, he had thoroughly enjoyed reading the mystery, and had even begun to feel some curiosity to see the scene of the tragedy. He proposed to have a few walks and drives through the neighbouring country, he said, looking at its streams and lochs with an eye to sporting possibilities; and it would be interesting to be able to recognise Keldale House if he chanced to pass near it.

Miss Peterkin told him which road led to Keldale and how the house might be recognised, and suggested that he should walk out that way this very morning. He seemed a little doubtful, spoke of his movements as things that depended very much on the whim of the moment, just as such an easy-going young man would be apt to do, and rather indicated that a shorter walk would suit him better that morning.

And then a few minutes later she saw him saunter past her window, wearing a light-grey felt hat at a graceful angle, and apparently taking a sympathetic interest in a small boy trying to mount a bicycle.

(To be continued.)

TWO SEPOYS.

I.

PRATAPRAO.

BY C. A. KINCAID, C.V.O.

"ARE there any Maratha soldiers here?" I asked a gaunt Eurasian nurse who met me at the door. She paused for a moment and then said, in her curious country accent: "Yes, there is one at the far end of the room. But he is a grumpy creature; I should not talk to him. There are some very nice up-country men here who would love to have a talk."

I was standing in the main room of the small hospital at B——, near Poona. A double row of beds faced me; each contained a wounded Indian soldier. Overhead were large white punkas, but they were not in use as it was the cold weather. From the beds looked out grave whiskered faces of Sikhs, round flat faces of Gurkhas, laughing roguish faces of Mussulman sepoys. They all looked at me with welcome in their eyes. But my business was not with them. They spoke Hindustani, and I spoke only Marathi. I went by their beds with a courteous salaam, and passed on to the far end of the room where lay the "grumpy creature." He was a heavily-built Maratha, and he lay gloomy and disgruntled, almost hidden by the bedclothes. As I came near his face grew more forbidding than ever. Still I walked on until I stood close to his head.

"Apan kase ahat? (How are you?)" I said to him in Marathi. The effect was magical. At once the scowl left his face and a broad grin took its place. "The Sahib speaks Marathi? Sit down, Sahib, and talk to me. All the English who come speak to me in broken Hindustani. And I hate the language. Is it not the tongue of the Mlecchа (the barbarian)?"

"Yes," I said with a laugh, "I speak Marathi. Now tell me all about yourself: who are you, and where do you live?"

"Yes, Sahib, without doubt I will. My name is Prataprao More. I come from the Krishna valley. Perhaps you know it? My village is Jor, just below Mahableshwar."

"Yes," I said, "I know it well. I have been down there several times after panther."

With wider grin and readier speech Prataprao went on. "Then the Sahib will understand. I am one of the Patilki family, and we trace back our descent to the More of Javli of King Shivaji's [1] days."

He paused, looking to me to continue the conversation.

[1] King Shivaji was the liberator of the Marathi-speaking people from Mohammedan rule. He is now deified, and a thousand legends have gathered round his name.

"But when did you join the army?" I asked. "Why did you leave Jor?"

"It was this way, Sahib. There was a feud in our village about June 1913. The son of the officiating patil was a great mischief-maker. He ate up our assessment and then complained to Government that we had not paid. At last I could stand it no longer, and one day when a murder occurred in our village I denounced the patil's son. The police came and with my help they prosecuted him, and the judge sentenced him to imprisonment for life. Thus we were rid of a rogue. But his father the patil hated me, and he harassed me in every way he could. Then the war broke out, and I thought that I should like to be a sepoy and leave the village. I spoke to my father, but he forbade me. He had heard dreadful stories of ships torpedoed in the black water. So he would not let me go with the recruiting havildar when he came to Jor. Some weeks later, however, an Englishman came to Jor. When the villagers heard of his coming they all fled into the jungle. They said to one another: 'The Government are lost. They send round Englishmen to take the villagers by force to fight for them.' But I stayed behind, resolved to speak to this Englishman if I could. I went to his camp and salaamed to him, and began to talk in such Hindustani as I knew, which was very little. What was my joy when the Sahib spoke to me in my own Deccan tongue! Then I told him with a frank mind all my trouble. I wanted to be a soldier. But was it true that all the sepoys who had left India had been drowned? 'All lies!' exclaimed the Englishman. 'Where is your father? Let me speak to him.' I led him to a fold in the hills where my father and some twenty other villagers were hiding. Then he spoke to them in their own tongue so simply and truly that they all believed him. And my father said: 'Go, boy, with the Sahib. He will be kind to you.' And I went with him, and twenty other youths of our village went with me. For indeed they could not help it. The Englishman stole our souls from out of our bodies."

"Who was the Englishman?" I asked.

"His name was Captain Burram Sahib."

"Captain Burham Sahib," I repeated doubtfully. Then I remembered a tall keen soldier who loved his men and who spent his leisure hours in learning their language, so that he might talk to them in it. "Yes, yes, I remember," I said —"a fine soldier."

"Well spoken, Sahib. He was the god Indra incarnate. Not a man in our company but would have died for him ten times over if it had been needed."

"You were in his double company?" I asked. "Yes, Sahib. We, the men from Jor, all asked that we might be placed in one of his companies. For we trusted him, as he knew our tongue. And he honoured us by consenting."

"Did you see any fighting? But you must have, or other-

wise you would not have been wounded."

"Yes indeed, we went with the Sahib to Poona. And there they drilled us for some months, and at last they sent us to Busra where the Poona brigade had landed and had beaten the Turks back up the Tigris. It was very hot in the city. The Konkan men did not mind it, but we men of the uplands felt it much. So the Colonel Sahib sent two companies of us Deccan men into camp on outpost duty. And Captain Burram Sahib was in command. We had great fun then, Sahib. The Arabs and Turks used to steal down to our camp and try to shoot us. And we would wait for them and try to shoot them as they stole up. But there was one Turk whom we could never catch. He always knew where we were watching and came by some other path, and every day he hit one of our sepoys. And daily Burram Sahib grew more wroth with him. One day he posted double sentries all round our camp so that we might surely catch this rakshas (demon) of a Turk. And that same evening he himself crawled round so that he might see that the sentries watched. In this way he came to where I and a comrade, Ramrao Mane by name, lay hidden. He spoke to us, and then raised himself on his hands to peer over a boulder at the moonlit landscape beyond. A second later there was a thud: a bullet from that accursed Turk had struck my beloved Sahib in the chest. He rose, whirled round, and fell over." Here the sepoy paused, for his throat choked his speech and two tears slowly trickled down his dark cheek.

"I and Ramrao picked up Burram Sahib and carried him to the camp, weeping as we walked. Next day they put him on board the hospital steamer at Busra. Thence, so I heard, they took him to Bombay, where they put him in a ship bound for Europe. But the hearts of all of us burnt with rage against that murderous Turk, and Mane and I often talked how we should be avenged. But for many days it was idle talk. And daily the Turk killed or wounded one of our double company. At last I thought of a plan, and I said to Mane: 'I shall treat this Turk even as King Shivaji treated the dog Afzul Khan.' Your honour remembers the story?"

"Yes," I answered, "I know it well. King Shivaji met Afzul Khan outside Pratapgad fort; and during the interview he drove his steel tiger-claws which he carried in his hand into Afzul Khan's side, and with his other hand he stabbed him."

"Hoy, hoy," said the delighted sepoy. "Even so I vowed I would treat this Turk. That very evening I clad myself as a Mussulman with a fez and white baggy trousers, and I crawled out towards where Burram Sahib had been shot. I carried no rifle, but in my left hand I had tiger-claws which the company armourer had made for me out of some nails driven through a piece of a kerosene

oil tin. And hidden in my clothes was the short dagger which I had bought at the time the patil's son was troubling the villagers of Jor. For a time I saw nothing. Then I heard far away to my right a faint noise, and guessed that it was the Turk crawling towards our lines. I stood upright and salaamed several times in the direction of the noise, so that he might think that I was a deserter. My trick succeeded, for not long afterwards I saw a dark body crawl noiselessly towards me. I lay flat on my face before him several times and said in Hindustani: 'O Turk, I am a Mussulman and can no longer fight on the side of these kafirs (infidels). So I have come over to join those of the true faith in this jehad (crusade).' The Turk spoke not but came closer still. At last satisfied that I had no rifle, he rose too and came close to me. And when he came near I saw that it was one Buland Khan, a havildar of the —th Punjabis, whom I had seen at Busra, and who, as I had heard, had deserted. Then I knew why it was he had known our camp so well and how he had shot so many of our men. When the Turk came quite close he said: 'By Allah's grace you have seen the light; welcome as a true Ghazi.' As he spoke he held out his arms to embrace me, and I also clasped him with mine. And as I did so I drove my claws with my left hand into his right side, and my dagger into his back with my right hand. With a cry he fell to the ground and begged for mercy. But I heeded him not, and with my dagger quickly sawed off his head, and carried it back with me to camp and showed it in triumph to Mane and the other sepoys."

"But, Prataprao," I said, "that was cruel of you. You should not have so dishonoured a fallen foe."

The sepoy's brow clouded slightly, and he said in defiant tones, "Does your honour think that King Shivaji dishonoured Afzul Khan by cutting off his head?"

"No, no," I said hastily, for I knew how touchy the Maratha is on all matters concerning King Shivaji. "No; for he buried his head on Pratapgad, and then built a fortress over it. I myself have often walked on Afzul Khan's tower, and have looked from it into the Koyna valley below."

"Even so did I not dishonour the Turk. I took his head back to our lines, and after the men had sufficiently feasted their eyes on it, we buried it just inside our trenches. And over it we placed upright a stone that bore a rude likeness to a human face. And we said, 'Let us deem this stone to be the likeness of our ancient King, the divine Shivaji.' And me they made the guardian of our little temple, as it was I who had won the Turk's head. So I painted the stone with red-lead; for, as the Sahib knows, that is how we honour the images of our gods. And every morning I beat a drum in front of it, so that the god might wake.

Then I bathed it and dried it, and placed rice offerings in front of it. And when the heat of the day came, I covered the image so as to shade it from the sun. Then again in the evening I roused it, and bathed it, and offered more rice to it. Daily I beat the drums in front of it to scare away evil spirits, and waved a lamp in front of it, so that its dazzled eyes might find sleep more easily. And always as I served the image, I kept King Shivaji in my mind and offered prayers to him. I did this for many days, and at night I slept quite close to my little temple. One day we had a long weary march in the sun along the banks of the Tigris to a spot where we hoped to surprise a band of marsh Arabs. But they heard of our coming and escaped us. So we marched back, tired both with the heat and with our failure. That same night as I slept I dreamt that I saw King Shivaji standing before me. I had seen pictures of him, and I knew at once his hooked nose and thin cheeks, his black fearless eyes and resolute mouth. But he was clad in dazzling white raiment, and instead of two arms he had four.[1] The meaning of this I could not grasp until the words of an old Brahman priest of Jor flashed upon me. For often he used to tell us that Shivaji was not a man like the rest of us, but an incarnation of the great god Shiva. Then I looked again, and saw that while in two of his hands the King carried a dagger and tiger-claws, in the other two he carried a trident and a conch. Then I flung myself full length on the ground and cried—

"'God or King, or whoever thou art, have mercy. I did indeed give false evidence against the patil's son. But then he was a mischief-maker, and the curse of all Jor.'"

Here I broke in and said: "Do you mean, Prataprao, to say that you got the patil's son convicted of murder by false evidence?"

Prataprao saw that he had betrayed himself, and was at first too confused to speak. Then he muttered surlily: "To ruin a foe deceit must at times be practised. Even Krishna practised it."

"Never mind," I said with a laugh; "I daresay he deserved it." For I began to fear that I should lose the rest of my story.

"That is so. I see that the Sahib now understands," continued Prataprao, much relieved. "And so too did King Shivaji. He spoke no word of the patil's son. He merely said, 'Prataprao, I am pleased with your worship of me. I am ready to grant you a boon. What would you have?' I ought, no doubt, to have answered that I wanted the speedy triumph of the English. But in a dream one is not master of one's speech. I placed my

[1] The possession of four arms is a characteristic of all Hindu gods and goddesses. The trident and the conch are always carried by the god Shiva.

forehead again on the ground and said: 'Grant me, I pray thee, the life of our Burram Sahib. For he is ill unto death.' The King smiled at me and vanished. Almost at once I awoke, and tears of joy were streaming down, for I knew that the King had heard my prayer. And Mane and the other sepoys who slept near asked me what had happened. For my face, so they said, was shining as one who had seen a god. Then I told them. And they all salaamed to me. For they knew, so they said, that I had won Burram Sahib from the clutches of Yama, the god of death, by my unceasing devotion. But just then the havildar came up and asked the cause of our talk. And Mane told him. But he doubted my story. 'Who knows,' he said, 'whether the tale is true or false, or whether the dream, even if Prataprao dreamt, had a meaning, or was not a mere creation of a tired brain? Let Mane and myself go to Johnson Sahib, who has just come to camp. He has in his hand a bundle of letters. Perhaps he has news of Burram Sahib.'

"Mane and the havildar walked towards Johnson Sahib, and at a little distance I and one or two others followed, so that we might hear what they said. When the havildar came close to the Sahib he saluted, and asked in Hindustani: 'The Sahib has received letters. He may have received news of Burram Sahib. I and the men of the company hope that Burram Sahib is well.' The Sahib's face lit up with a smile as he replied: 'Yes, indeed, havildar, I have just received a wire from the doctor. Burram Sahib reached England nearly well yesterday.' The havildar and Mane saluted, and then we went back to our trenches. But that evening we paid great honour to the image, and covered it afresh with red-lead, and gave it a great store of rice. And afterwards we ate the rice, and feasted, and carried the image round the camp in a palanquin. And I also received great honour. Even the havildar salaamed to me. For all knew that it was by my prayers and worship that Burram Sahib had come back from the claws of Yama——"

"You must have been pleased at the honour paid you," I said, for the sepoy had paused, and seemed unable to go on.

"Yes, Sahib, I was pleased alike at the honour paid me by men, and at the vision vouchsafed me by God. But that pleasure was a little thing compared with the joy I felt that our Burram Sahib would soon be well, and would come back to us to lead us against the Turk."

And here the sepoy's voice broke altogether, and the tears coursed each other down his bronzed cheek. I put my hand on his shoulder and said—

"Be not sad, Prataprao. Why weep when your Sahib is safe?"

"The Sahib is right," replied the sepoy; "I am weak with my wound. Indeed, I should

rejoice, for soon we shall be together on the Tigris fighting the Turk." Suddenly the tears left the sepoy's eyes, and they kindled at the thought of battle. He sat up in bed. And then for the first time in its history the long white-washed room of the little hospital heard the famous cry, to the sound of which the Maratha horse once slashed their way to victory on a hundred stricken fields—

"Har Mahadev! Har Mahadev!"

But his triumph was short-lived. A moment later the gaunt grim face of the Eurasian nurse reappeared in the door. "You really must go, sir, you have stayed far too long, and you have excited all the patients. Just look, they are all sitting up in bed."

I looked round, and indeed every patient in the hospital —whether Gurkha, Afghan, or Sikh—was sitting up glaring in our direction with the most sinister expression. The Maratha war-cry had roused unpleasant memories.

"But, nurse," I protested, "Prataprao has not yet told me how he got wounded."

"I can't help it," she said firmly. "You must go now. If you want to hear that story you must come some other day."

"The pisach (she-devil)," growled the sepoy.

"Nay, Prataprao, she is right. I must go now, but I'll come again in a few days and talk to you again."

The sepoy's face lit up, and he said as he shook my hand: "Barre, Sahib, barre (Right, sir, right), lavakar yea, lavakar yea (come again soon, come again soon)."

II.

ABDUL.

BY W. C. S.

ABDUL shall be my khidmutgar when I return to India. No doubt I shall hear him execrated by all and sundry, but knowing how good it is to be Abdul's master, and how deeply engrained in our memories is the mutual help rendered and received in the bad old days, I shall smile and be silent in the face of the fiercest denunciations.

I am bound to admit, I fear, that Abdul cannot be regarded as a scrupulously moral man, and the satisfied, almost proud smile with which he told me of how his Christian Arab friend, Yusep, got himself hanged in his (Abdul's) place in Kut-el-Amara in November 1916 would naturally shock morality at home. Perhaps as an old acquaintance on service, he realised how lenient a view I should take of the case; for Abdul and I (his name alone I have altered, all else is ungarnished truth) had been with the same regiment throughout the earlier Mesopotamian campaign, and after

the fall of Kut we marched up country in the same batch of prisoners of war. I remained at Mosul in the hospital there and saw batch after batch of weary half-naked prisoners pass through to the second part of that terrible march. Abdul too went through, and was lost in that land I was always trying to picture, and of which I could hear but hazy and contradictory reports—the desert stretch of 170 miles to Ras-el-Ain and the railhead.

The summer settled down inexorably, and from six to ten, Arab time—there were no reliable clocks, so we reckoned sunset as twelve o'clock like the rest of the Arab city—man and dog lay and endured; the beggar and the pariah lying side by side in the scanty shade of a mud wall, moved round a foot or two with a curse or a growl as the midday shadow slipped quickly round from west to east.

I think I am not peculiar in being short-tempered if disturbed before tea in hot weather: at any rate the entrance, after a somewhat flurried knock, of Abdul into my room during my August afternoon siesta did not excite a welcoming smile and cheerful greeting, especially as I saw him attired in a German follower's kit, his pugri replaced by a dirty white peaked cap with the inevitable little concentric coloured disc in front. However, Abdul's knowledge of my psychology was based on old experience, and a large and fragrant plum-cake rapidly produced saved him from being flung out. Obviously, thought I, here was an occasion for less summary treatment; plum-cakes in those days were not mere luxuries, they were miracles. If Abdul and I must part in anger, it would be hard if that cake and I must part in sorrow as well.

"Abdul, what is all this? Have you too joined the multajees, the deserters?"

"Your honour knows I hate the German log, of whom I only know that they are pigs."

"What are you doing, then, in this rig-out?"

"The desert is a bad place," with a wave to the west, whither our hungry and ragged army had been driven to captivity—"many are dead, more are dying for lack of food and clothing. A man must get back to the English log south of Kut before the winter, or die in misery over there. My German log are going to Persia, to Ravandooz, to fight the Russians. It is better to ride back with them and fill one's belly and wait one's chance, than to go as a poor starving haji to be robbed and beaten by the Arabs and perhaps caught and hanged by the Turks."

I knew enough of Abdul to realise that here was no empty lie to fool me, but a statement of fact patent to all.

"The German log know an Indian is the best cook between Stamboul and Singapore, so I have charge of their kitchen. Allah in his mercy has given them but a feeble intellect, and"—pointing to the cake—"they sleep in the afternoons."

I received several brave cakes from Abdul during the next few weeks, and enjoyed them

the more knowing who had paid for them. Then I heard that the Duke of Mecklenberg's Mounted Machine-Gun Mission had departed for Ravandooz, and Abdul's visits to me ceased abruptly.

It was at the end of November 1916 that I returned to Bagdad by kelek (raft) for exchange, and on December 14, my papers being signed by Khalil Pasha, I was told to go down to the trench line at Kut on the next boat. I think it was that same day that General Maude's great offensive started in earnest, which lost me my chance of exchange.

I was having tea one day in my room overlooking the river, opposite the hotel where I got an excellent dinner every evening from my friend Zia, and was wondering what had happened to Abdul when a note was brought up by an Arab urchin.

"I have heard that your honour is in Bagdad; I am in prison, can the protector of the poor get me out?—Abdul."

This seemed a trifle difficult, to say the least. Doubtless, thought I, knowing Master Abdul as I did, he is in for some good and sufficient reason, and who am I that I can beg him off? Now Cassim Bey was the commandant of prisoners in Bagdad. Among other less desirable attributes, he was an Arab, very vain, and wishing to stand well with the British in case of Turkish disasters. I hear he subsequently deserted to us. I went to his office next day, and after the usual coffee and cigarette, and polite inquiries about health, he asked what was the news—*i.e.*, what did I want?

"Oh!" said I, "Cassim Bey, I am in such a plight; my cook has been taken ill, and there isn't another good one at the prisoner's depot!"

"Aman! Aman! effendim, neh yapalam, what shall we do?"

"There is only one man," I replied, "in Bagdad powerful enough to help me, now that the Vali Bey and Khalil Pasha and Haidar Bey have gone down to Baghaileh with Herr Grossmann Pasha, and that is yourself—or perhaps the Gendarma commandant might help me."

Now, Cassim and the Chief of Gendarmes were sworn enemies.

Wherefore Cassim bestirred himself, and the end of it was that the prison governor was induced to deliver up Abdul to me that same evening, after which my cook (whose illness was of course fictitious) occasionally received the benefit of Abdul's conversational powers, and at intervals allowed him to prepare me a plum-cake. He was wretchedly ill-looking, I remember, though he recovered very quickly, and had many subsequent adventures.

The roof of our house after dinner, with a moon over the river and a gentle breeze rustling the palm-tops, was an appropriate setting for Abdul's yarn, he squatting facing the moon, and I in a deck-chair, with a bottle of árak rather nearer him than me.

"Yusep was a simple man,

and of course he would have got *me* hanged if he had had the brains, poor fool. He didn't know I had run off with the Germans' papers and maps, and being a Christian, he believed me when I told him I was a poor harmless date-seller. So we went into partnership, and I shared his hovel in the remains of Kut town, taking the more protected side of the hut, for the English shelled us a good deal, and Yusep lay like dead with fright for hours. Allah is just.

"The papers were hidden under my mat, in the ground. Also a good deal of money I had had to buy the Germans food with. When I ran from Ravandooz I put my German clothes in their biggest pot with all their tea, cocoa, mustard, and rice, over the fire to cook, and took the captain's boots and revolver as far as the first stream. I always kept a poor haji's cloak and fez in my kit, and these were all I wanted for disguise for the 250 miles' tramp to Kut."

This I could well believe, as poor Wali Dad, of the 3rd Sappers and Miners, who was afterwards shot trying to escape, migrated (I can think of no other word) from the Amanus district to Bagdad dressed in a gunny bag only. I saw him arrive. Seven hundred miles.

"In Kut I bought a stock of dates, in partnership with Yusep, from an Arab, and we used to go and sell these to the Turkish soldiers. Of course we used to get beaten often, but the chaoush would let us sell to his men if we gave him a good lump of dates for himself. I used to wander all over the Turkish positions for miles on quiet days, selling dates, and all the time trying to see how to get across to the English lines. The river was down then, so it wasn't difficult to get about; but once or twice I was beaten for going too near the forward pickets.

"One day I was arrested and taken before an officer, who thought I was a spy, and when Yusep brought me some food at the Gendarmerie, I told him to go quickly and bring me food and my bedding. I also told him the English were going to shell the town in an hour, and he should have my side of the hut, which was safer than his. A poor dull man, by Allah, who believed what I told him about the shelling. Also he did not guess that the hut would be searched. I told the Uzebashi I was a poor Mussulman, who sold dates to the glory of Allah, but I thought perhaps Yusep was a spy, and might have papers hidden in his hut. That is why they hanged him that evening in the main street, and only sent me to prison in Bagdad. Allah is merciful and just. Any fool could tell that the man under whose bedding the maps and papers were found would be hanged. El hamd ul illah, they only hanged one of us; but then a Mussulman is not hanged so easily as a Christian in that country—unless he also is a fool."

A COMPANY OF TANKS.

BY MAJOR W. H. L WATSON, D S.O., D.C.M.,
Author of 'Adventures of a Despatch Rider.'

CHAPTER VI.—REST AND TRAINING.

(May and June 1917.)

We thought that we should remain in camp at Behagnies for a couple of months or more, and train. The prospect pleased us mightily. It was true that we were no longer alone. When we had selected the site for our camp, we had been able to choose from the whole countryside, but now the downs resembled some great fair. Horse lines stretched to the horizon. The German light railway had been repaired, and busy little trains were forming a large ammunition dump a few hundred yards away from the camp on the road between Behagnies and Ervillers, the next village towards Arras. Balloon sections, water-lorry companies, well-boring companies, all sorts and conditions of army troops, were moving up and occupying the waste spaces. But the air was glorious; the country was open, clean, and unshelled; there were trenches to practise on and good ground for manœuvres; our camp was comfortable, and, after our recent exertions, we did not look forward to the troubles of a move. Haskett-Smith's company had joined us from Boiry, and our workshops were being set up with much care among the ruins. So the battalion, after fighting on the fronts of three armies, once again was complete, though, to our sorrow, Colonel Hardress Lloyd had left us to form a brigade, and a stranger from our particular rivals, "C" Battalion, had taken his place.

There were rumours, too, that we should soon be asked to assist in an attack on the Quéant salient, immediately to the west of the Bullecourt trenches and east of the front on which we attacked in November. It was reported that Tank Headquarters had been most favourably impressed with the country, which was in fact perfect for tanks. The going was hard and good. Natural obstacles could be neglected. We determined at the first definite hint to take time by the forelock and spend some summer days in close reconnaissance.

Our hopes were blighted early. Before we could attack confidently over the downs, we were to lose many of our best officers and men in the fatal quagmires of Ypres, but luckily in those magnificent days we knew nothing of the troubles in store for us. The authorities soon decided that the Behagnies area was not suitable for training. It was

becoming too crowded. The trenches were to be kept in good repair for defensive purposes, and might be used only by cavalry, who, to the amusement of us mechanical folk, would go galloping through lanes in the wire and over carefully-prepared crossings. We were ordered to Wailly, a day's trek distant. We began to pack up, and I took Cooper over in my car to see our new habitation.

Wailly is a shelled village on the edge of the old trench-system from which the Germans had retired in March. From Arras it is the next village to Agny, whence, according to the original plan of battle made before the enemy withdrawal, my tanks should have set out for Mercatel and Neuville Vitasse. Naturally, there are plenty of trenches just outside the village, and Tank Headquarters had decided to set up a driving-school. When we arrived, some of my men were putting up Nissen huts for the school, and close by there was a park of practice-tanks. One company of a new battalion, fresh out from England, was already installed in tents. We nosed round the village.

It had rained. You could smell the earth and the new grass. There were little green copses and orchards behind broken walls. The fruit trees were in blossom, white with rare pink buds. Under the trees and in out-of-the-way nooks and corners in dilapidated houses and old barns tiny bunches of oats were sprouting, liquid-green shoots, where the horses had been. There was rhubarb in the gardens, and the birds were singing.

The French at one time used to hold this sector, and their notices still remained in the village. Some pictures had been done on plaster, which "Messieurs les Militaires" were asked to protect; but time and weather had erased them, until nothing was left except the fine scrawl of the artist's signature, the title "Mont St Michel," and some patches of red and brown.

The church must have been ugly with its stucco and imitation woodwork, but in destruction it was a pleasant place for meditation—the white plaster with scraps of blue-and-gold decoration, the plum-coloured brickwork laid bare, and the fresh delicious grass clustered on every cornice.

Our camping-ground was a green slope between two derelict trenches, half-way up a hill—a clean and healthy site away from the road, but near enough for convenience. We looked down from it on the village, which had a friendly air, because the cottages, despite the shelling, were at least recognisable, and not mere rubbish-heaps like those in the country which the enemy had laid waste. . . .

We moved on the 10th. A company of tanks moves luxuriously. If there is no room on the lorries for any article of vertu, it goes on the tank. The Equipment Officer or the Company Commander

need not be as inexorable as the Quartermaster in an infantry battalion, for he is not haunted with a vision of transport fully loaded and much baggage still piled by the roadside. Each officer, for instance, carried at this period a rough wire bed on the roof of his tank, with a chair and perhaps a table. The additional weight did not affect the tank, while the additional comfort did affect the officer. The only danger was from fire. These superfluities, if carelessly lashed, would slip on to the red-hot exhaust-pipe. Again, if we moved a short way, the lorries could easily make a second journey. If we moved a long way, we moved by train, and usually, but not always, the train possessed facilities. Later, we became more Spartan and strenuous.

We arrived without incident at Wailly — the tanks had trekked across country — and proceeded to re-erect the tents and structures which we had collected at Behagnies. The men were glad to return to the edge of civilisation. They had not seen a civilian for two months.

Training commenced at once, but before we had moved my Company had begun to disappear. There were dumps at Montenescourt to be collected: the material had not been required in the Arras battle. There were new battalions arriving in France who would need camps. The driving-school wanted a few men. Brigade Headquarters wanted a few men, and, naturally, battalion headquarters could not be content with its exiguous establishment. My hopes of thorough training dwindled with my company. Soon I was left with under a third of my men. I was scarcely able to collect a few scratch crews to drive the tanks which had been allotted to us for practice. This scattering of my company was intensely disappointing. My drivers were only half-trained before the first battle of Arras, and most of them were to continue half-trained until we returned to Wailly in October; for in the third battle of Ypres we drove either along straightforward tracks or over appalling roads. Moreover, when a driver is driving in action or into action he dare not go beyond what he knows. He cannot experiment, find out what the tank can do, and discover the best way to do it.

Our tanks were most useful in allowing my new officers to learn by teaching. The old German front trench was a fearsome place in which it was easy enough to become ditched, and it was good for these officers to spend a day in the hot sun extricating their charges.

The great event of the month was the Tank Cross-country Race.

The course ran over a sunken road with steep and crumbling banks, across a mile or so of rough grass intersected by some slight trenches, over our old trench system, back again across the open and the sunken road, and home along a tape carefully laid out in curves

and odd angles. Marks were allotted for style and condition as well as for speed. The sunken road was to be crossed where there was no recognised "crossing," if marks were not to be lost, and the tank had to take the tape between its tracks, twisting and turning without stopping and without touching the tape.

It was a gorgeous day. An excited crowd gathered in front of the tanks, which were drawn up in line. Officers walked up and down with field-glasses, slung racing style. The form of the runners was canvassed, and bets were made freely. Ward's tanks were the favourites. Ward had taken the greatest care in selecting and training his crews. He possessed a few really skilled drivers, and on the evening before the race his tanks had done remarkably well in a private trial. Haskett-Smith had refused to interrupt his training. His crews were to drive over the course as part of their afternoon's exercises. We had practised immediately before the race, and my men were as keen as they could be. As some of my best drivers were away I did not hope to win the Company championship—even with my best drivers present, Ward's men would have been the toughest of customers—but I hoped with one of my two best tanks to win the first prize.

The tanks started at minute intervals. The first tank took the sunken road with consummate skill. The second, looking for an unused crossing, tried to climb over a dug-out which caved in. One tank blindly fouled another, and they slipped to the bottom of the road interlocked and unable to move. The rest were well away. At the turning-post there was a marvellous jumble of tanks. One fellow could not get his gears in and blocked the road, but the rest managed to nose their way through, sweeping against each other.

As the tanks crossed the sunken road on the return journey you felt the driver brace himself for the final test. The tank would come forward with the tape between its tracks. At the first curve it would barely hesitate before swinging. Ward, bubbling over with excitement, watched the tank breathlessly. She was just going to scrape the tape. No, by heaven, she's missed it! Another tank might stop—the gears had not been changed cleanly—amidst the scorn of the spectators. Luckily, the driver inside the tank could hear nothing that was said.

I should have liked to relate how the tanks came crawling along sponson to sponson, and how my tank won, but I must in fairness confess that Ward's company won an overwhelming victory. My favourite did not even start. He had been sent in the morning to instruct some infantry, and when he came to the starting-post a little late in the day, his engine was so hot that he dared not compete.

I strongly advise some enter-

prising gentleman to buy a few tanks cheap, and stage a cross-country race over give-and-take country. There is nothing quite like it. . . .

A few days later we were paraded to receive congratulatory cards, and an address from General Elles. It was a steaming hot day, without a breath of fresh air. The sun beat down unmercifully on our shrapnel helmets. As usual, we had to wait for half an hour or more, and in our hearts we cursed all inspections, generals, and suchlike things. The ceremony was fortunately not prolonged, and the address held us attentive. The General had taken a great risk in sending to the battle two half-trained battalions in old-fashioned tanks. He had been justified by results. We had shown our worth. By steady training we were to prepare ourselves for the next battle.

When the General spoke of "steady training," I thought of my company's ranks depleted by the call of innumerable "fatigues," and sighed. It was, of course, unavoidable —"fatigues" were not created for fun, — but I earnestly prayed that soon the Tank Corps might obtain by hook or by crook some Labour companies to put up their huts, and leave me my fighting men to train for the great battle.

It was all the fault of these new battalions, who wanted snug places prepared for them. . . .

Our life at Wailly was not all training, inspections, and fatigues. It was necessary, for instance, to celebrate certain domestic events which occur even in the most modern families. My car had disappeared for the time being, but a box-body or van was sufficient to carry us into the "Hotel de Commerce" at Arras, and, later in the evening, to bring back a merry singing crew to the old cottage which was the section's mess. There, with the gramophone and Granteffski at the piano, we poured out libations to the Fates, and completed the celebration of an event which cannot happen twice in the life of one man.

Even towards the end of May we played an occasional game of football, and in the stream which ran through the village there was a bathing-place by the bridge, overhung by willows. . . .

Although in the far distance we could just see a German balloon and Arras still was shelled, we were not unduly disturbed by the enemy. The days of concentrated night-bombing had not yet arrived. Only one venturesome 'plane, looking for Corps Headquarters, then at Bretencourt, the next village, bombed down the valley and sadly frightened the pet kid of our workshops by dropping a small bomb into the courtyard of their farm.

Johnson,[1] our Workshops Officer, replied by carrying out experiments with the child of his brain, "the unditching beam," a device

[1] Major P. Johnson, D.S.O.

whereby a tank was enabled in marshy ground or crumbly soil to lay a log in its path and pull itself through the slush or the soil. This device was of the utmost value. It saved innumerable tanks, and the lives of their crews. The invention was perfected by others, but the credit of the original idea belongs to Major Johnson, who first applied the unditching beam in its most elementary form to Ward's tanks before Vimy.

While we were basking in the sunshine at Wailly, and while one important officer was trying to cure the sweaty itch by taking strong sulphur baths, and feverishly sucking multitudinous oranges, the Tank Corps was expanded and reorganised.

The First Tank Brigade, under Colonel C. D. Baker-Carr, had consisted of "C" and "D" battalions. These two battalions had taken part in the recent battle. The Second Brigade, under Colonel Courage, was formed provisionally of "A" and "B" battalions. The arrival of new battalions, who had been raised and trained at home, made a Third Brigade necessary. "C" battalion was taken from the First Brigade and two new battalions from home, "E" and "G," added to it. The Third Brigade, under Colonel J. Hardress Lloyd, D.S.O., was made up of "C," "F," and "I" battalions. "H" battalion was to join the Second Brigade in due course. That was the second stage in the growth of the Tank Corps—from twelve companies to twenty-seven.

We were not allowed to stop long at Wailly. Each battalion had to take its turn in the trenches, and we had had our turn, although less than half of my drivers had been able to practise. Before we went into action at Ypres in the autumn, my drivers received no further training. In justice to the four battalions which were formed in France, I find it necessary to emphasise the handicaps under which they fought.

We had no desire to move our camp, particularly when we were told that we were to leave "standing" all those tents and "temporary structures" which we had so cunningly acquired. You can never persuade a soldier to believe that possession is not ten points of the law. Our "temporary structures," we would argue, belonged to us, because we won them by the subtlety of our brains and the sweat of our brows. That canvas orderly-room, for instance, would have been rotting in a deserted camp on the Somme if we had not sent a lorry and three stout men for it. Those five extra tents belonged to us, because the Fifth Army forgot to recall them when we moved into the Third Army area. Those tarpaulins —well, everybody is justified in picking up anything that the garrison gunners may leave about—it is only taking what they stole from somebody else. Still, there was no getting round the order, though it was remarkable how full the quartermaster's store became, how some of our tents and "tem-

porary structures" seemed to change colour and shape in the night, and how neighbouring units, who had jeered at us because we had now to leave our well-gotten gains behind, began to lose a tarpaulin or two, an unoccupied tent, or portions of an outlying hut.

I do not intend to imply for a moment that my men ever took anything to which they had no right. Such an accusation would be a vile slander. Nothing of the sort ever came to my notice. I never once received an official complaint; or only once, when some coal disappeared from some trucks standing on the sidings at Blangy — and then none of my men were recognised; but I will say that neither of the two tank companies which I commanded in France was ever short of accommodation for more than a few days. My men were always perfectly capable of looking after themselves, and my own comfort was not neglected. We never allowed Government property to remain for long without a thoroughly efficient guard.

I went from Wailly by car on May 27th a few days before my company, as I had been detailed to attend a course at Erin. I was sorry to leave the bright dilapidated village, the coarse grass, and the breathless, dusty trenches, the hot lanes, heavy with the scent of wild flowers on the banks, the masses of lilac in Bretencourt, and the old people slowly returning—it is always the oldest people who return first.

I drove through delicious lanes to St Pol and then by the lower road to Erin, a leafy village in the Tank Corps area, which extends along the valley of the Ternoise from St Pol to Hesdin. Erin was the "workshops" capital of this little state. There were the central workshops and the central stores with their vast hangars, their sidings, their light railways, their multitude of tanks, old and new, and their thousands of grinning Chinamen. There was the driving-school and the lecture huts, full of stripped engines carefully set out on scrubbed tables. There was the experimental workshops, from which later tanks with "mystery" engines would dash out and career madly about at incredible speeds until they broke down. In a quiet corner of the village were the trim cheerful huts of the Rest Camp, where men, too weary of the battle, sat in the sun, planted cabbages, or looked for something that had not been whitewashed. Add the Cinema, the Supper Club, hutting for a battalion, a good château and a Reinforcement Camp, which, finding itself strangely far forward, retired to the company of its brethren on the coast.

After I had reported at Erin, I drove through Bermicourt, where Tank Corps Headquarters dwelt, to Humières, the immediate destination of my company. I was met by Cooper, my second-in-command, who was in charge of the company's advanced party. He reported well of the village, and in the quietude of dusk

it seemed a most pleasant place. The mess-cook, however, had not arrived, and as we had no substitute, we drove into Hesdin, at that time an outpost of G.H.Q., and dined moderately well at the Hôtel de France.

My first impressions of Humières were confirmed. The village lay off the great high-road that runs from Arras and St Pol through Hesdin and Montreuil to the coast at Boulogne. All the cottages have little shady gardens and hot orchards and rich meadows. Everywhere are big trees and more birds singing than I had ever heard before in one village. At first we determined to move our huts into a quiet orchard, carpeted with thick luscious grass, and two lazy cows for friendly company. On three sides the orchard was enclosed with stout hedges of hawthorn. On the fourth it sloped down to some ploughland, and from our tents we should have looked over the bare countryside, misty in the heat. Finally, to avoid the work of moving, I chose to remain in a large double Armstrong hut, which stood under a row of great elms at the edge of a big grass field which we used as a parade-ground. Most of the officers and all the men were billeted in cottages and barns. In the farther end of the village was Haskett-Smith's company, Battalion Headquarters were at the château, where the Countess and her three daughters still remained, and Ward's company were at Eclimeux, a smaller village on the Blangy road. The tanks were packed in a tiny tankodrome just outside Eclimeux, too hot a walk from Humières in the sun.

I saw little of the village at first, for every morning I motor-cycled down to Erin for my course. Nothing could have been more thorough. First we paraded, and then we disappeared into various huts, where we were lectured on the engine. In the afternoon we would go down to the hangar, and after a general description we would plunge into grease and oil, doing all those things which are required. Later we drove under the direction of an expert instructor. It was a senior officer's course, and we were all of us not entirely ignorant, but soon we realised how little we had known. We drove over trenches and banks, and at night we learned the art of bringing a tank to its point of balance and keeping her poised there for a moment, so that she might slide easily down into the trench. We were initiated into the secrets of sweet gear-changing and all the arts and devices that a proper driver should know. It was most certainly a good course.

While I sweated inside a tank and inhaled noisome fumes and spoilt a pair of good gloves, my company had arrived at Humières. It was hardly a company. Although the company was "resting," my men were working hard. Some were still at Montenescourt clearing surplus dumps. Some were at Sautrecourt putting up huts and taking them down again, when it was

discovered that some cheaper land was available near by. Some marched down each morning to Central Workshops and assisted the Chinamen in their labours. Some went down to the coast on gunnery and physical training courses. For most of the time I had only forty to fifty in camp. But the huts at Sautrecourt were finally erected on a proper site, and my men at Montenescourt rejoined in time to make good a few of the casualties we sustained in our next action.

On the 4th June I accompanied Johnson, the battalion engineer, and Cozens, the adjutant, on an expedition to the north. We drove through Lillers and Bailleul to Ouderdom. I had not seen Bailleul since March 1915, when the 5th Divisional Cyclist Company, in which I had just received a commission, moved north to Ouderdom. Bailleul had not changed. It was still a clean and pleasant town, where you could buy fish. Tina, an almost legendary damsel, whose wit and beauty were known in five armies, had arisen and was about to disappear. The "Allies Tea Room" had opened. The lunatic asylum still held good baths that were open to officers twice a week. The "Faucon" was as dingy as ever.

In June the back area of the salient was like a disturbed ant-heap. We were making every possible preparation for an attack, and apparently we did not mind in the very least whether or not the enemy knew all about it. The countryside was "stiff" with light railways, enormous dumps, fresh sidings, innumerable gun-pits, new roads, enlarged camps. No advertisement of the impending attack was neglected. The enemy, of course, realised what was happening, and acted accordingly. He had brought up a large number of long-range guns, and his aeroplanes flew over on every fine day. He had, too, the advantage of direct observation over all the forward area. The results were unpleasant enough, even in June. Dumps would go up with a pleasing regularity. Camps and railheads were always being shelled. Bombing continued by day and by night. In front we destroyed the German trenches, breastworks and fortifications, and shelled their batteries. They retaliated in kind, and the unprejudiced observer would have found it difficult to award the prize. The enemy were scoring heavily with their gas shells.

We drove first to Ouderdom, a vast and enticing railhead, which the enemy shelled methodically each night, much to the annoyance of "B" Tank Battalion, who lived, for reasons of state, at the edge of the railhead. Their tanks were housed with disarming frankness in a series of canvas stalls surrounded by a high canvas screen. The whole erection was perhaps three-quarters of a mile in circumference. The tanks were so obviously concealed that the enemy never suspected their existence. The shells that dropped each night

into the camp were the ordinary courtesies of warfare, although they did at last produce a move.

We had an excellent lunch with the Engineers of the battalion, Johnson expatiated on his new "unditching beam"; we inspected certain novelties that had been fitted to the tanks, and then from a windmill on a hillock we watched the smoke of a "practice barrage." We drove on by Dranoutre, where in '14 I was despatch-rider to a brigade of the 5th Division, over the hill to the headquarters of "A" battalion in some pleasant woods, untroubled by the enemy. After drinks, salutations, and some "shop," we returned in the cool of the evening, stopping in the square at Hazebrouck for dinner and a good bottle of burgundy. It had been a fine day, with just enough sun. All the woods were fresh and green, and there was a purple sunset.

The Battle of Messines was fought four days later. The attack was a complete and overwhelming success. The whole of the Ridge, which for so many weary months had dominated our lines, was captured at a low cost. "A" and "B" battalions of tanks were useful but not indispensable. The ground was difficult and in places impossible. Many tanks became ditched. Certain tanks retrieved a local situation finely by the stout repulse of a strong counter-attack. We received the impression that, if the weather had been wet, tanks could not have been used. Although we did not realise it at the time, the battle of Messines was the first and only successful act in a tragedy of which the last act was never played.

An expedition to the salient only sharpened our appreciation of the quiet and charm of Humières. What more could man want in the year of grace 1917 than to lie under the trees, sipping a cool drink, and watch Wright, the left-handed mainstay of our side, open his shoulders to a half-volley, or, when the sun had gone in, to stroll out and scrape together a lucky "6" instead of the usual "4"? We had no "seasons" at Humières. Each evening during the week we would play cricket, and on Sunday we would play a company of "F" battalion at football, and beat them by some outrageous score—12-love, I think it was—or, while we were indulging in the equivalent of a little net practice, the football enthusiasts would be crowded round the goal at the other end of the field. Whichever game we played, the company won most of its matches.

No self-respecting battalion would ever allow its period of rest to go by without battalion sports, and "D" battalion respected itself mightily. Our pet athletes started to train as soon as we reached Humières. After the Messines battle there was some doubt whether it might not be necessary to postpone the sports until after the next "show." Rumours of an immediate move came thick and fast, but the Fates were not so unkind, and our sports were held on the eve of things.

My company had prepared the way with a minor affair. The field was small and uneven, and in the longer races there were so many laps that, as our company wag exclaimed, it was a wonder the runners did not get giddy before they finished. If the times were doubtful, the enjoyment was unstinted, and after mess all the seats and the company piano were brought out into the open, and we sang songs until it was quite dark.

The battalion sports, a few days later, were a social event. An immense field positively sprouted with dark-blue flags, the colour of the battalion. There were pipes and drums from the 51st Division. The staff were conspicuously resplendent, while the Countess and her daughters were the centre of attraction. Haskett-Smith particularly, . . . but it would not be fair to drag in the name of a mere company commander and leave out that of a full colonel. It was a splendid afternoon, although Battalion Headquarters won the cup. They would not have tried to win it, some one said, if they had not been able to drink out of it.

In the evening there was the usual entertainment of the "Follies" type under the direction of the "Old Bird." It was organised more or less on the spur of the moment. Supported by an issue of free beer it was an uproarious success, although it was sometimes not too easy to translate the jokes into French for the benefit of the Countess and her daughters.

It was a great night, and all the pipers were so satisfied with their refreshment that they could not ask for more; and if pipers of the 51st are incapable of asking for another drink, then they are incapable indeed, and a loading party must turn out to place them gently in the lorries. . . .

In the heavy heat of those long days it was easy to forget the war and the shadow of the battle, coming up wrathfully, like a thunderstorm. Little expeditions were as pleasurable as children's treats. The drowning of a bus driver at Merlimont Plage, where our gunnery school was among the dunes, gave me a swift run to the sea, and we called in at Boulogne "on the way back" for stores. Then there was always that old coaching hostelry at Hesdin, the Hôtel de France, which provided none too bad a dinner for those who were sick of the eternal roast-beef of the mess.

Finally, lest we should find life too monotonous, the new tank battalions were arriving from Bovington Camp in Dorset, which had always been held up to us in France as a very pattern of discipline, a haven of content, a perfect well of energy, a paradise where the senior officers and the tank engineers never thought of using any part or fitting of a tank, such as a clock, accumulators, or even a dynamo, for their own private purposes and the decoration of their huts. As for the depot at Wareham, we pictured it as a place where thoroughly nice young officers

spent laborious days and nights in fitting themselves for the noble tasks before them. Certainly these new battalions were beautiful to look upon. Their uniforms were new, they saluted smartly, and by a stupid and tactless blunder they were wearing on their sleeves the famous badge, representing a tank, which we had waited for so long. I shall never cease to wonder at the patience of the British soldier. Here were four battalions of veteran volunteers, who, after they had spent hot and weary weeks removing vast dumps and erecting multitudinous huts, were given the privilege of watching these immaculate recruits, of whom many were conscripts, swaggering with their tank badges. I do not pretend that the course of the war was changed by this incident, and I do not wish for one moment to insinuate that these new battalions did not very soon prove themselves worthy of any badge. It was, however, a pity that when there were not enough badges to go round, the men who had fought and volunteered were left badgeless. The badge at once became a thing without value, just as later the savour of the 1914 Star disappeared when fighting men first saw the ribbon on the breasts of clerks at Boulogne. In any war there must always be some jealousy between men who fight and men who do safe though indispensable work behind the lines, between men who have borne the heat and burden of the day and those newly out from home. Unfortunately these little jealousies were often accentuated by such blunders, and the fighting man felt that he was neglected. A baker and a bomber received the same medal, and the appalling state of the leave-trains was always attributed to the fact that the staff, who went on leave with such tactless regularity, travelled to the coast by motor-car.

It was good to see Hammond, who had come back to France again in command of a company of "F" battalion, to plumb once more the depths of his vocabulary, and to hear his frank criticism of those set in authority. But the comments of these new-comers, or rather in Hammond's case, these returned wanderers, led us to doubt whether after all Bovington Camp was a better place than Humières.

So June passed in rich sunshine—all those glorious fighting days were wasted. The order came for us to draw new tanks, and we began to hurry our preparations for the most ghastly of all battles, the third battle of Ypres, in which the wounded fell into pits of slimy water and drowned slowly, screaming to their comrades for help, and the tanks, sticking in the mud and sinking sometimes till they were swallowed up, were compelled at last to fight precariously from destroyed roads.

(To be continued.)

THE ARMENIANS.

BY EDMUND CANDLER.

One heard that the Germans were all over the Black Sea Province, and that the Turks were trekking up from Trebizond and would soon be in Batoum. Things were being made cosy for the Hun at Tiflis, for he came with gifts in his hands—whole chunks of Russia and Armenia, not to speak of Azerbaijan — where the Georgian could lord it and grow fat, feeling safe and patriotic and independent without firing a shot. The Hun had bought this road to the Caspian, but the Turk had determined to be there first. He was already in Baku. A large Ottoman force was coming up from Erzerum. Troop trains were expected at Akstafa any day within the next week. Palestine and Mesopotamia were being abandoned. Baku was the new goal. Turkey was for cutting her losses; and for reward and compensation she saw a compact Moslem state from the Bosphorus to the Caspian—and, who knows, how far beyond! The Khanates were both Moslem and Turanian, and Enver and Nuri had agents in Khiva and Bokhara and Samarkand. Needless to say, these dreams were displeasing to the Hun, whose imperial eye was cast even farther than the Turk's — on Meshed and Quetta, on Merv and Khushk and Afghanistan.

The representatives of Great Britain in Trans-Caucasia had found shelter in an overturned railway truck, which had been shot down the embankment near Mingechua in the desolate mulberry-coloured plain. A few miles north of the line the eastern spurs of the Caucasus, dwindled now to an insignificant range of hills, bevelled down towards the Caspian. It had been the Tartar habit early in the year, a form of shikar, encouraged by the Turk, to break the culverts and hold up the returning Russian troop trains. The rifles came in handy against the Armenians and other Christian spawn. Orders had been issued to search trains and arrest the British, or British agents, if any could be found.

The representatives of Great Britain at the moment—Dawson and Willow—were an ill-asserted pair. Dawson had been in Trans-Caucasia since February 1918 — one of two or three, the advance-guard of the Dunster Force, who were held up for months at Hamadan. He had been working between Tiflis and Erivan, trying to organise bands of Georgians and Armenians, in the vain hope that they would fight side by side against the Turks, whose advance was imminent. He had no illusions about either. The Georgian

cared too much for his skin to make any sacrifice. The Armenian had a kind of heady futile pluck—half vanity, half desperation, — but he was utterly undependable. Each hated and distrusted the other. In his heart Dawson really liked the Moslem, whom he thought the manlier and straighter breed — a view shared by many officers who know their Middle East. Dawson was a regular in the Indian Army, a political for the moment. He knew Turkish — hence his post in the forefront of the adventure. His companions had escaped out of Tiflis along the military road to Vladikavkas, or fallen back on Baku after the small British force had been withdrawn. They were all either dead or prisoners of the Bolshevik or Turk. Chance had thrown him against Willow in the khan at Elizabetpol.

Willow was a very different type. An undergraduate of Balliol in his second year when the war broke out and a student of Russian literature, he was spending his long vacation at Orenburg. He had fought on the Galician front, been wounded, and afterwards put in two years with the Russian Staff, Intelligence and liaison work in Turkey and Persia. He was at the taking of Erzerum, and after the revolution joined Bicherakoff's Partizanski in time to take part in the operations that secured the flank of Maude's army on the Kurdish and Persian frontier north and east of Baghdad. The two had met first of all in a Punjabi mess at Mendali, and Dawson remembered his companion's wide and inquiring eyes, longish hair, glasses, and imperishable academic manner; and how, in the morning when Ivan and Nabi Baksh brought in their respective cups of tea, they had almost quarrelled about Armenia. Willow was sitting up in bed reading a magazine called 'Ararat.' The picture on the cover offended Dawson. The spire of the cathedral at Ecmiadzin was made to stick up between the twin peaks of the sacred mountain like the third prong of a fork. Above it crude shafts of light descended from heaven, a repetition of the diagram inverted as if mirrored in a pool. Dawson felt unreasonably irritated. He did not like the Armenians. He hated their propaganda. The response to it in Europe and Armenia was a grievance he shared with the Tartar and the Turk. This crude Ararat design, with its rent heaven and aspiring earth, seemed to him a spurious appeal to sentiment, quite symbolical of everything he suspected about the race.

"So the Armenians have got a newspaper?" he remarked.

Willow looked up, conscious of the prejudice in his companion's voice, but not surprised.

"Hardly a newspaper," he said.

"Propaganda?"

"Yes, I suppose so, in a way. They are the most obstinate nationalists alive."

Dawson admitted their obstinacy. "Armenia is the Turks' Irish question," he said.

"Settled by the standards of the Stone Age."

"It's the law of survival. If the Turks did not massacre the Christians, the Christians would eat them up. The Armenian is the village bunniah. When he has swallowed everything, the Turk rips him open and makes him disgorge."

"Have you seen much of them? In their own country, I mean, the peasants and landowners?"

"No, not in Armenia. In Anatolia, shooting before the war. I have no use for them, a chattering crowd, physically degenerate," and Dawson enlarged on the virtues of the Anatolian, his hardiness and good-humour. "The finest material for troops in the East. They do what they are told. They don't discuss; they obey."

Willow scented the Anglo-Indian in this. "Personally, I have no use for people who do what they are told," he said.

"You think the chattering stage a phase of evolution. I don't agree."

"It's inconvenient, you mean."

"The difference between your Armenian and the Turk is the difference between the half-baked hybrid Bengali student and the Pathan."

"It's the case of the underdog," Willow replied, with difficulty curbing his temper. He felt that Dawson had the prejudiced superficial view of the traveller who derives his impressions from the cringing Levantine, the Port Said photographer, the touts and dragomans of Constantinople and Smyrna. They had been within an ace of quarrelling.

The two met again in the khan at Elizabetpol nine months afterwards. Dawson recognised Willow. The large spectacles, the round inquisitive eyes in which curiosity and assurance were oddly blended, brought back Mendali. He remembered the walled palm-clumps as black as ink against the white and yellow sand, the Cossacks' part songs, the Khattak dance, the Punjabi piper, the Kahar's parody of a nautch, the Sikh's cry of "Wah Guru Ji Ki-Khalsa" as they left the camp and the almost acrimonious discussion they had had about Armenia over their morning tea. Both were in disguise. Willow was a Russian civilian, Dawson a Moslem Asetin in a black Astrakhan cap, wearing a cherkass with silver-capped cartridge cases bulging on either breast. Both were suspect. The Turks were in front of them and behind them. German officers were crowding the streets of Tiflis. They had boarded the train together at Elizabetpol, meaning to slip out before Baku and work down the Caspian to our own people in Resht. But once in the train they found it was being systematically searched, carriage by carriage. It was the break in the line that saved them. Freight had to be carried across; passengers were transhipping to another

train a quarter of a mile down the line. In the confusion they hid in the overturned truck.

Dawson watched the smoke of the disappearing train. It was a depressing landscape, gloom and slush and rain. No cultivation, the thick heavy clouds only a shade lighter than the universal mud. They had left the hills behind, and reached a country that was almost Mesopotamian in its bleakness and absence of feature. Five miles to the north there was a Tartar encampment, two miles to the west the small station of Mingechua which they had passed in the morning. Dawson had noticed that there was no Turkish guard at Mingechua. He was for avoiding main communication now. The train was a death-trap.

"Better strike down south to the hills," he suggested to Willow, "follow the Shusha track, and cross the Persian frontier."

"The Tabriz road will be thick with Turks."

"We need not go so far south. We could strike the Caspian somewhere near Astara, and work down the coast to Enzeli."

Both were agreed that the Tiflis-Baku line was "asking for trouble." The Turks were much too wide awake. Here on the steppe they had nothing to fear but loot or murder. The Tartar peasant was not "politically-minded." As one left Georgia behind and entered the Elizabetpol Province of Azerbaijan, one noticed a different type of face. Here one was in the Tartar country, among a more Oriental people —more passive, simple, and resigned in countenance, staring fixedly at nothing, a less exacting folk, less suspicious, and so, perhaps, more easy to satisfy and govern. One missed the restless furtive glances of the urban population, the prey of "aspirations." It was not betrayal or unrest one had to expect here, or a spy's death, but unsophisticated murder. There had been no government in Azerbaijan for over a year: even in peace time the steppe country at the foot of the hills was not healthy for travelling: the odds now were distinctly against two Englishmen, with promise of loot on them, armed only with revolvers, getting through even so far south as Shura.

It was a dismal prospect. The rain broke through and collected in a pond, leaving them only half the tilted floor of the truck. They had been silent for long minutes, when Willow broke out, as if inspired—"Why not join the Armenians?"

Dawson stared at him. "The Armenians?" He remembered Mendali and his companion's fatuous picture of Ararat.

"Andranik cannot be more than eighty miles off. If we miss him, we might try Amazasp or Babyan. After all, Andranik has kept his end up all the time; he is still fighting the Turk, and he is still our ally."

The argument was undeniable. There were no other

allied forces within six hundred miles. But Armenians! Dawson could not take them seriously. By the irony of fate he had been sent out as a pioneer to mobilise, discipline, and drill them. He had tried the Armenians, and given them up. Yet there must be good stuff in Andranik. He had been out from the beginning, a scourge to the Turks. He and his men had mopped up many a straggling detachment in the hills. They had fought a rearguard action all the way from Erzerum to the Caspian, holding the passes, and delaying the Turks' advance for months. A ruthless fellow, too, credited with bloody reprisals. He had seen Armenian women and children butchered, and he meted out like measure to the Turk. Tartar villages had been destroyed in Elizabetpol and Baku, and not a living soul spared. But the man was undoubtedly a patriot, and, what is rarer, incorruptible. He never recognised the Armenian Republic of Erivan, born of compromise with the Turk, with whom he would have no traffic. "An uncompromising nationalist," Willow called him, "with something of the old Cromwellian spirit." Even Dawson admitted now that the Armenians were capable of producing hard men, of great firmness and strength of character. "Only these are not town-dwellers," he added. "The town-people who wear ties and collars and short coats are only talkers—unmixed bandar-log."

"It's a question of environment," Willow said, thinking of the Armenians he knew at home, who were just like other people, only a little cleverer, and generally more alive and keen. "Give the Armenian a chance, and he is good at anything he takes up. As for grit, he has proved it these nine hundred years. He might have become a Moslem, but he stuck to his faith and refused to be submerged. He has preserved his nationality centuries after he has lost his country."

"I respected nationalism," Dawson said bitterly, "until I met the Armenians. I wish I could make them fight for it."

"What about Andranik? What about the mountaineers of Zeitun, who defied all the expeditions the Turks sent against them and captured their guns? In France, the Armenians of the Foreign Legion died almost to a man in the defence of Verdun. And you remember Sabian, sergeant of the 6th King's Own, in Mesopotamia, who had fought in the Balkans and wherever he could kill Turks, and who proved himself as stout an N.C.O. as any in the regiment——"

"Isolated cases."

"Yes. Isolated from their environment. Remove the Turk, and you will find the true Armenian. Remember, in the *wilayats* the Armenian has no rights. The Kurds are armed by government, and incited to pillage. The Armenian goes about defenceless like a

small boy at school in a dormitory of bullies."

"He gets his own back in an underhand way."

"What can you expect of a man who is always looking over his shoulder for a kick or a blow?"

Dawson frankly did not expect anything. He took the Armenians as he found them. "I know they've never had a decent government," he said, "but one can't always be making allowances for people who have been badly brought up." And he told Willow some of his adventures earlier in the year. He had been sent out to raise an army in the Caucasus against the Turk. Georgians, Armenians, and Tartars were to be drawn in. It was essential for the success of the scheme that there should be no distinction of privilege. But the Armenians with their chattering tongues spoiled everything. They kept alive the impression that we were out to help them alone. Their talk and boasting added to the bitter feeling that was being fomented against us. It was impossible to get near a decent Moslem. Then in March they joined hands with the Bolsheviks to drive the Tartars out of Baku. This was the last straw. Naturally, the Mussulmans thought it was a plot inspired by us to rid Azerbaijan of the friends of the Turk. The massacres of Mohammadans that followed were in the best style of Mush and Baibourt. It was the biggest mistake the Armenians ever made, though it is only fair to say that it was the fault of the local Dashnukt extremists. The Armenian National Council were all against it, and did what they could to keep the peace.

"The Armenians at Baku," Willow objected, "are as representative of the race as the Glasgow mechanic is of the Highlander."

"They betrayed us in September."

Willow defended them. "They were not soldiers," he said. It was unfortunate that the first contact of British troops with Armenians was with this alien industrialised rabble — men who were not soldiers, but who were gauged as such, who could not be trusted to hold their bit of line in the face of the least discouragement, who hawked their machine-guns about the streets when they were hungry, and bartered them with a potential enemy for bread and sausages and fish.

"And who betrayed us?" Dawson said.

"They were told to make what terms they could with the Turk."

The two were as near quarrelling as they had been at Mendali, and over the same bone of contention. Dawson rose stiffly and surveyed the world from the truck. It had stopped raining. "Well, what about our friends Babyan and Andranik?" he said. "Anyhow, we must get to Mingechua to-night, raise ponies, and chance it."

The station was dark and deserted when they reached Mingechua, but a light from a

window in a fenced garden and the sound of a gramophone told them that some one on the station staff was awake. They climbed over the palings and stumbled through the thick undergrowth to the house. Peering through the window, they saw that the station-master was a Tartar, as they had expected. He was entertaining; there were three others with him; the room was furnished western fashion with a table and chairs; there was a samovar in the corner; the group were sitting round the gramophone drinking infidel Tiflis wine. Dawson knocked loudly at the door. Soon a light in the passage revealed him standing on the threshold in his Asetin dress. He explained to the Tartar that he was with a troop of Partizanski a few miles down the line. They were returning through Tiflis to their own country, but two of their horses had gone lame. He and his companion had come back to Mingechua, hoping to replace them. They must be off early in the morning. In the meanwhile they were looking for somewhere to sleep.

Fateh-Ali-Khan, for such was the station-master's name, invited them in. He insisted, with charming courtesy, that they were his guests. The ponies should be at the door with the earliest light. The house was their own. It was evident that wine had mellowed a naturally genial and unsuspicious temperament. As they entered the sitting-room the other three Moslems rose with grave inebriety from their seats. Fateh-Ali-Khan, after some vague introductions, produced two more bottles. He opened one, drank half of it himself, and then filled his guests' glasses.

The gramophone did the greater part of the entertaining. First a few washy Turkish love-songs; then a patriotic march. Later, when discretion was comfortably drugged, Fateh-Ali-Khan selected a record with a gesture of deliberate mystery, as if he were performing some rite. Soon the voice of Enver proclaimed his own greatness through the room, and the deliverance of Islam from Christian rule. The British, he said, though porpoises at sea, were mere cattle on land, and he told how he had driven them out of Gallipoli and Mesopotamia, and how the Russians had fled before him from the Caucasus, and how he was going to found an empire in their stead.

The Tartars were evidently deeply moved. They spoke of Enver as "the hero of Islam." They execrated the British for their support of the Armenians. "What worth had these dogs that they should draw armies to their aid for no other reason than that they were Giaurs?"[1] Who in Europe cared for the butchered Moslem? The names of Andranik, Amazasp, Babyan punctuated this commination. But Eng-

[1] *I.e.*, Christians.

land was finished, Fateh-Ali-Khan said: America had declared war on her, and seized Gibraltar. She had not even command of the sea.

It was not difficult to draw the talk on to the Armenians. Andranik, they learned, was beyond reach, somewhere in Karabagh or Zangevur. Amazasp, of whom one had heard little, still haunted the environs of Baku. Babyan, that other obscure leader, could not be more than forty versts away. Only three days ago he had burnt and pillaged a Tartar village, repeating every detail of outrage that the Turks had taught him in the *wilayat* of Erzerum. Fateh-Ali-Khan was afraid that he would descend on the railway and attack Mingechua, and he wondered what Enver was doing, and whether he had listened to the actual voice of the "hero of Islam."

Everything pointed to Babyan. They must reach him and inspire him, and use him in some way. He and his band were doing no good in Azerbaijan with their bloody reprisals. They must get him down to Resht, where the British were; or, better still, on the flank of the Turks north of the Tabriz road, looting and cutting up convoys.

Thus, sprawling on the divans of Fateh-Ali-Khan, while the four Tartars in the neighbouring room slept their drunken sleep, the soldier and the undergraduate, representatives of Great Britain in the Caucasus, disposed, as they thought, of the last pawns on the board, knowing nothing of Foch and Haig and the turn of the tide on the Western Front.

II.

They found Babyan and his band on the third day after leaving Mingechua. As they topped a low sandy ridge at the foot of the hills a group of horsemen galloped out to meet them; hearing they were English, the leader spread out his troop on either side and escorted them in.

Dawson was surprised to find piquets out and a line of fire-pits echeloned round the camp. But Babyan was the biggest surprise of all. He received them at the door of his tent, a short stubby man of forty or forty-five, very dark and weathered, his hair quite white, cropped close and stiff and standing up like wire on his head, a hearty, burly, emphatic man, who could laugh, very broad-shouldered and muscular, a dark intelligent face, Roman nose, eyes like jet beads with an electric light behind them, and an expression worth watching in repose. The two Englishmen gravely saluted the Commander of an Allied Force and passed into the tent, Dawson stiff and erect, a little unnecessarily stiff perhaps, and with something of the proconsular air, Willow with his incurable academic stoop.

"We heard the English were

coming," Babyan said with a smile, and in a tone which made the irony quite inoffensive.

"We want you to join the English," Dawson replied.

"Where are they?"

"There are none nearer than Enzeli and Resht," he admitted.

Babyan shook his head sadly. "We have work here," he said, "close at hand."

Dawson remembered how casually he had disposed of Andranik, Babyan, and their bands as he shaped the course of things in the truck at Mingechua, moving them like pawns on the board and believing that they would be docile just because they were Armenians, though he did not count on them for initiative or for seeing anything through. Babyan somehow did not fit in with his scheme. The type was new to him. He had a glimpse of the hard unmalleable concrete in the man; he wondered for a moment what the work was that would keep him busy "close at hand."

"Did you see Tchaz this morning as you entered the hills?" the Armenian asked them.

They had seen Tchaz. It was a Tartar village which the Armenians had destroyed —the village of which the station-master had spoken. They had loitered in the ruins a few moments and were driven out by the smell and the hideousness of what they saw. Many of the bodies were unburied. The only living creature in the place was a cat, loathsomely employed. Dawson opened a chest, half-charred, its metal hinges warped by the heat. He shut it quickly, and said to Willow as he stumbled out of the house and mounted his pony—

"God help the upper-dog when the under-dog comes up top."

Babyan kept his eyes fixed on the Englishmen awaiting some comment or answer. "We have learned certain things from the Turk," he said. He evidently regarded himself as a just avenger.

"And this is your work—the work you spoke of that keeps you here in Azerbaijan?"

Babyan smiled grimly. "And what do you think of it?" he asked. "It is good work, is it not?"

"Better be killing armed folk," Dawson objected, "who can hurt. There are Turks enough; why not kill Turks?"

"The Tartars were armed. We kill Turks too." And he told them he was expecting an attack. His dispositions were all ready. "It is cheaper to be attacked," he explained. "We kill more and do not lose so many."

Dawson admitted the soundness of these tactics. He reminded himself that the Armenians were a calculating people; in all their dealings, he had heard, they showed a nice estimate of profit and loss. But he had not expected this peculiarly Armenian characteristic to square with everything that had been rubbed into him at Sandhurst and the Staff College.

"You will see," Babyan continued, "the Turks will attack and they will soon tire of it. They will leave their dead all over the slope. Our machine-guns are well sited. If they stay we will break through them at night; they will not follow us fifty miles from the railway. Then we will destroy another village. Afterwards we will help our people in Zangezur and Nachivan."

The first part of the scheme commended itself to the Englishmen, and they saw the futility of the merely ethical argument against reprisals. Babyan was out for blood and the despoiling of Moslems. The only chance was to persuade him that he would kill more Turks and carry off more loot farther south—on the Tabriz road, for instance, by which the enemy threatened to come down in force on Kasvin, cutting our communications between Baghdad and the Caspian. It would be easy for Babyan's band to harass them without great risk to themselves, and they could live on the convoys. But it would have to be done in concert with our own people. If Babyan consented, one of them, Dawson or Willow, must find his way to Enzeli to establish liaison, while the other stayed with the Armenian and kept him to his pact. The question arose of joining up with other bands. Andranik was suggested, but Babyan shook his head. They discussed the Tabriz plan until it was dark. Babyan was not obstinately opposed to it, but he wanted conviction. The most hopeful thing in its favour was that he was evidently attracted by his guests. He paid England many compliments, and spoke of Gladstone as if he still directed the policy of the West. The British, he said, were the only true friends Armenia had, and he still believed that they would break through the Turks and come to her aid. Allenby and Marshall, as a matter of fact, had already broken through to Damascus and Mosul; the Ottoman Empire had crumbled and perished; the Armistice was only a question of days, but nobody in Azerbaijan knew it.

Babyan had an Armenian's idea of hospitality. The afternoon was one long protracted meal. A succession of dishes were brought into the tent by a timid little lady, pale and sensitive and dark-eyed, who looked as if she had seen much suffering. Babyan addressed her as Mariam, and Dawson and Willow were astonished to discover that she was his wife. The white wine of Erivan was found even better than the red wine of Tiflis which they had drunk in the house of Fateh-Ali-Khan. It quickened their talk; but, though he drank freely of it, it did not visibly affect their host. Babyan spoke slowly, without gestures, and gave one the impression of reserve force. When you asked him a question, he would pause, look at you straight, and roll out his answer in a sentence or a phrase, very much to the point. But on Armenia he was almost voluble. He had

read a book published in Tiflis by the Armenian Press called 'The History of the World.' It was the only book he ever read, and he studied it solely for the light it reflected on Armenia, or rather, in the light of the glory Armenia lent it. His country and his people were associated in his mind with everything great in the past. More especially did he enlarge on the beauty of his native city of Van, the great lake with the white sails on it, its broad and shady streets, and the gardens and vineyards spreading out for miles from under the Castle walls. "This paradise," he said bitterly, "the Turks converted into hell." At the beginning of the massacres, he and an earlier band he had collected, since exterminated almost to a man, held the Armenian quarter of the walled city for nearly a month against the Turk. They were 1500 with a bare 300 rifles, and they held a perimeter of walls and trenches and barricaded houses over an area covering more than a square mile.

Turkish regular forces were entrenched against them with artillery; ammunition was limited, but they manufactured bullets and cartridges and gunpowder, and even a primitive form of trench-mortar for throwing bombs. After a month they were still undefeated, when they saw the white sails of the Turks who were retreating over the lake. The Russians had come, headed by an Armenian volunteer force from the Caucasus, and were driving Djevdet Bey and his army out of Van.

Afterwards, when the Turks were reinforced, Babyan covered the retreat of the Russians and the Armenian refugees over the frontier into Erivan. He did not escape with them, as he might have done, but returned to the village of his brother-in-law near Erzerum. Here he found his wife. It was a desperate journey early in June. He travelled at night, hiding through the day. No quarter was given the Armenians of Turkey from the day that their kinsmen of Russia had driven the Ottoman force out of Van. Whole villages and towns were evacuated, and the inhabitants halted and murdered at the first lonely place on the road; prisons were filled every day and emptied at night, and those who were arrested were no more seen.

Happily for Babyan, the men were despatched first: it is to this that he owes it that he was able to save Mariam. After many hairbreadth escapes he was taken in his brother-in-law's house near Erzerum on the very night of his arrival. The men of the family had been butchered; the women were left. He had been recognised in the street, but before the gendarmes tracked him down he had spoken with and embraced his wife.

Babyan was one of the last group in the village to be led out to the place of execution. The Ottoman way of putting an end to the Chris-

tians differed in different districts, according to the whim of the Wali or Kaimakam. In this particular district of Erzerum it was the custom to remove the victims at dusk in groups of fifty or so, with their hands tied behind their backs, poleaxe them, and throw their bodies over the cliff into the stream. The work was done by Chettis—convicts recruited from the public prisons, proved and efficient agents of murder, deliberately released by the Turk for that end. Babyan found himself bound by a rope to four other men. He described how they walked abreast, one of them chanting loudly, the others silent and desperate or making their peace with God. The gendarmes and the convicts chattered noisily; it appeared that they had some grievance against the Kaimakam about the price of a head. "The Kaimakam promised us six piastres," one of them complained; "he has only given us four and a half." The niggardly fellow, it seems, had deducted 25 per cent in consideration of the value of the victims' clothes and the money that was presumably sewn up in them. The Chettis put no heart into their work; it was a perfunctory performance. Babyan believes to this day that he owes his life to the niggardliness of the Kaimakam.

As they approached the narrow valley where the cliff falls sheer into the stream, they heard sounds that told them the victims in front were being despatched. Their own turn came. They were clubbed one after the other, so that each man felt the weight of his neighbour on the rope before the blow fell on himself. Babyan was the last, standing nearest the river. It was almost dark, and the Chetti blundered. The axe fell on his shoulder, merely grazing the side of his head. He was not quite stunned, and as he lay on the ground he heard the assassins grumbling about the inadequacy of their wage and the meanness of the Kaimakam. They turned home discontentedly, and did not even take the trouble to roll the corpses over the cliff into the stream. Babyan was able to drag his four companions to the edge of a sharp rock, against which, after an hour or two of effort, he managed to saw through the rope. He was free, and returned in the darkness to his brother-in-law's house. The watch of the guard was relaxed, as it was thought that the last male in the village had been despatched. He found Mariam stretched on the floor sobbing. He lifted her up into his arms and comforted her. During the night he carried her away, swearing that he would never leave her, and that she should accompany him wherever he went—in all his adventures, in peace or war.

They joined a band in the mountains, of which Babyan became chief, gradually collecting round him the few stalwarts that survived. They lived by brigandage, descend-

ing on the Moslem villages of the plain — burning and pillaging in a manner they had learnt from the dominant race. For nearly three years they had been a thorn in the side of the Turk.

Babyan, when he reached this point in his story, spoke, after his fashion when he was moved, in an exaggerated impressive whisper, the small finger of his left hand doubled flat on his palm, the index finger of his right laid significantly upon it, as he looked you straight in the face. It was his only gesture. While he was talking, Mariam entered the tent. She sat listening in a corner, her elbows on her knees, huddled up on a quilt. When he described their meeting at night after his escape from the Chettis, he turned to her with great tenderness in his voice, addressing her by name. Very quietly she added some details to his story. It was quite true. She had reason to believe that Babyan was dead — poleaxed like the others. She herself was ready to die. "Then in the middle of the night he came."

Babyan, in a few terse words, indicated the anxiety and strain of the Armenian women waiting for the massacres to begin. "Think of it," he said, "to have been fearing and hoping alternately for weeks; then looking out of the window, in a moment's forgetfulness, to see the group of armed men take their stand at the end of the street. So it has come. These are the assassins. To wait for the beginning — to hear the bugle, the signal for the attack, the first blows, the crash and thud of a falling body in the next house, the cries for mercy. . . ."

That night Dawson and Willow supped full of horrors. Babyan would not leave his theme, and Dawson began to understand many things he had not understood before — among them the furtive way the Armenian has of opening a door. He saw the ruling and the subject race in their true relations. Gradually he began to shed his respect for the Turk. "How is it," he asked himself, "that the Armenian has preserved any nationality at all? There must be grit in him." And Willow, who knew something of the history of the race, wondered more and more whence he derived his ineradicable homing sense, his obstinate clinging to the soil. To be Ottoman subjects is not a good education for men who have the work of building up a nation afresh. To be always looking over one's shoulder for some form of death, forfeiture, or chastisement, may breed in one a certain fund of furtiveness and cunning, but it does not lend itself to any buoyancy of spirit. It would be only natural if evasiveness were the monopoly of the Armenian and Greek under the Ottoman régime, but the young Turk has nothing to learn from his Christian subjects in the way of treachery, hypocrisy, and underhand deceit.

Babyan described the tragic

and cynical farce of the deportations, Talaat and Enver's "agricultural colonies," the many wiles by which the Osmanli sought to place the Armenian in the category of rebels, the collection of arms which the Armenians had to buy from the Turks themselves and hand in to the Kaimakan.

"These villagers and dwellers in towns are not very brave," Babyan confessed; "but what can you expect?" And he told them of the burning of monasteries, the murder of priests, of torture, of men mutilated and shod like horses, of whole families hanged upon unfounded charges, of thousands sent out into the desert to die of weariness, hunger, and disease, stripped naked by the Kurds and Arabs; and he told them of babies shot in their mothers' arms, small children thrown into the river —those who could swim shot down as they struggled to the bank; girls of ten distributed among the Chettis and Kurds for their pleasure; maidens who refused to become Moslems outraged and murdered; old and weak women, "who had lost their charms," herded and driven like cattle till they dropped; women in childbirth left to die by the roadside—many of these the wives, mothers, and daughters of Armenians who were serving at the front.

Dawson was impressed by his host's restraint. His narrative was all statement, no comment—a grave emphasis all through, but an absence of stress or anything approaching an appeal. Babyan was an Armenian who did not plead or whine; he quietly built up his indictment; then when he rose to say goodnight, he shook his fist at the West and roundly cursed the Moslem and all his works.

III.

Three days passed, and the Turks did not deliver their attack. Babyan had consented to go south to the Tabriz road, and for this reason it was necessary that one of them, Dawson or Willow, should carry a message through to our force in Persia. Another necessity was money. Babyan was living on the country. The Tartars he pillaged, the Armenians he paid, but his treasury was running low. The rouble notes would have to be raised in Baku, which was now in the hands of the Turk; but Babyan had agents there on whom he thought he could count for funds, and who should be able to secure a passage for Willow—the choice fell on him—to Enzeli, or if not to Enzeli, at least as far as Astara on the Persian frontier.

It was a difficult and dangerous journey; disguise was, of course, essential. Tartars and Armenians were massacring one another wher-

ever a majority encouraged attack. But Baku itself would be more dangerous than the road there. Everything depended on the trustworthiness of the Armenians. The few who were left in the city were either in hiding, or they had bought a precarious immunity from the Turk. To reach them would be difficult; to escape detection and arrest during the days one must spend in Baku more difficult still; to get oneself conveyed to the ship from one's hiding-place most difficult of all. Willow was aware that the odds were against him, but he counted on his luck which had held by him all through the War. He might without vanity have counted on a certain native astuteness too, and a presence of mind which so far, when a quick decision was vital, had told him what to do. Willow did not walk or talk like a soldier, yet there was something assuring about him. Even Dawson, by this time, after making every allowance for accent and gait, had complete confidence in his academic friend.

One Borujian, an Armenian banker, a refugee in the camp, was sent with Willow by Babyan. It was Borujian's business to guide him to Baku by the safest road, to introduce him to the family with whom he would stay, to negotiate a passage for him, and finally to bring back the roubles of which Babyan was in need. They were more than a month on the journey, and every day Willow cursed the dilatoriness of his guide. When they reached an Armenian settlement, Borujian would feign sickness, or invent some excuse for delay, afraid to commit himself again to the uncertainties of the road. Willow wondered why Babyan had chosen him. He supposed it was on account of his financial interests in connection with the roubles. For his own part, he had no confidence in the man, and his aversion grew daily with acquaintance.

Borujian had a shifty eye, normally downcast. There was a lack of spontaneity in the movement of the pupil when it lifted that filled Willow with distrust. The man owed his life to Babyan. He had enjoyed his hospitality and protection. Yet once out of the camp he showed no sense of gratitude or responsibility. He was neither a patriot nor an honest friend. He seemed to have forgotten his benefactor's needs; he thought only of himself, and he malingered shamelessly. He was lame, he had boils, an affection of the heart, or he would pretend that it was necessary to wait a few days for some agent who was to help him in the collection of the roubles.

These were the most exasperating days of Willow's life. Borujian always fell sick in some settlement, where the refugees on account of their numbers felt a certain security from attack. Here among the peasants and small traders of the race were collected the intelligentsia, Dawson's "chattering crowd," many of them

young men who might have been fighting with Andranik or Babyan, but who were content with talk, incapable of action. Willow, weary of the inevitable jeremiad, would escape, follow the long low arc of hills overlooking the plain, enjoy the solitude, pluck the green hellebore, and forget man. It was a country in which one was always trying to forget man. He was shocked sometimes to find that he could not sympathise with the Armenians as he ought, or if he did it was with a sympathy of the intelligence rather than the emotions. He reminded himself of the refugees he had seen in the streets of Tiflis and Elizabetpol. Willow had seen sad sights in the war, famine and carnage, but few sights more sad than this queue of Armenians searching vainly for shelter or food. Not only did they seem to have lost all hope; they seemed no longer capable of curiosity or even of interest in themselves. All expression had been wiped from their faces as with a sponge. Even their haunted look seemed more an inheritance than the imprint of fears that had any relation with their immediate sufferings. Yet in these villages of exiles Willow found that one always had to be dragooning one's sympathies with the oppressed race. One had to look at the Armenian children and the honest, weathered, and wrinkled features of the old ladies to renew one's indignation with the Turk.

Borujian's friends, with whom Willow had to consort during these bouts of malingering, were of the least attractive and most adhesive type. Many had come from Baku. They addressed him in French. He was given to understand that they belonged to a community "*très civilisé*." One of them showered on him six huge visiting-cards in three days; another followed him about with *chiffres*. It became more and more difficult to get away alone into the hills and forget man. Babyan and his honest folk were driven from his mind. There was a physician who clung to him with all the adhesiveness of Tartarin's camel. The man would come to him to tell him that Borujian needed "a month's rest"; then, to use Dawson's expressive phrase, he would "spin out his jeremiad by the yard"; and all the while Willow knew that many of his statements were false, his figures faked, and the presentment of his case disingenuous. The Armenians, like other races who inhabit this vexed portion of the globe, are prone to exaggeration, and it does them no service. Here are a people with a theme of personal wrong which no invention can embellish. Yet they must estrange sympathy by adding colour and false embroidery to it. They are always innocent, never the aggressors; they will not even admit reprisals; they suffer all things. The physician made Willow feel that a massacre in a distant province was an asset to men of his kidney, so much to chalk up on the board,

to add to the account. He scented commerce in martyrdom. The Armenians' propaganda had been successful up to a point, but it was all wrong. Why could they not stand out as honest rebels? It was their business to rebel and to strike out, if not above ground, at least to burrow and mine. Let them admit it. They would have the sympathy then of all the world—of Englishmen from Burma to the Levant, of the Dawsons as well as of the Willows. They had a mountain of prejudice to overcome, and they had built up the greater part of it themselves. "The Turk is a sahib," Dawson used to say, "the Armenian a bunniah." It was a point of view common in the East. A few years before the war Dawson had come back from his shooting tour in Anatolia as constitutionally pro-Turk as Lamartine. At Mendali he thought Willow a sentimentalist on account of his pro-Armenian sympathies; but in reality, as regards the Turk and Armenian, he was the more sentimental of the two. He saw the Osmanli with the eyes of the modern French weaver of romance, as "that chivalrous gentleman of the old school," who, because he only knows how to ride and fight, has fallen a helpless prey to Christian usury and finance. It is the supine Turk's view of himself—a carcase plucked by vultures,—Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, and Jews,—parasites whose privileged appetite is indulged by the British humanitarian, and turned to political account by statesmen covetous of his land.

Willow envied Dawson in the camp with Babyan. He wondered if the Turks had attacked. He felt miserably responsible for the treacherous weakness of Borujian. He even thought of pushing on independently to Baku without him. But, supposing he got there and discovered the Armenians who would help him, there seemed little chance of collecting the money and sending it through to the camp. The liaison business could wait,—it was many weeks yet before Babyan was due on the Tabriz road; on the other hand, Borujian was clearly a broken reed, no good could come of waiting for him indefinitely. Willow had decided to give him two days' grace, when chance decided the matter. After all, there was some point in Babyan's selection of the banker. Borujian had established communications with a wealthy Tartar merchant; the Armenians' financial resources in Baku were well known. It was owing to this that Willow and his guide, disguised as two Moslem women, were able to make the last and most perilous stage of their journey in a cart. Half-concealed under an awning, they travelled now with comparative safety and speed, Nazarbegoff, Borujian's Tartar accomplice, in the front seat passing himself off as the husband of both.

The entry into Baku was very different from the scene

Willow had pictured in his mind. He had imagined a furtive arrival by night in some remote quarter of the town, an anxious scrutiny of shadows, a silent figure gliding in front of them down some dark passage, pointing the way to their place of concealment. Instead, they drove through the city clattering over the stones in broad daylight, and drew up at a conspicuous house in one of the principal streets facing the quay. Nobody challenged them. They did not excite the least curiosity or attention. The whole place was a scene of confusion. Turks everywhere, lorries, camions, pack transport, limbers, guns, ambulances, field-kitchens, ramshackle old buffalo carts which always seemed to be slewing round athwart the current, blocking the way. The traffic was all going west out of the city. Evidently something was afoot, operations of some kind. Willow hoped that it was not an organised drive to sweep up the last remnants of the Armenians.

Nazarbegoff left his seat by the driver, stepped across the pavement and rang the bell. The door opened and the two Muhammadan ladies in their thick veils followed him without concealment into the courtyard. Nazarbegoff preceded them up the stairs, and led them to a room opening on to the verandah of the first floor. "If you wait here," he said, "I will bring your clothes. I think you will not find disguise necessary."

When he left them Borujian explained that they were in the house of Ali Begoff, one of the wealthiest Tartars in Baku, an oil king, a reputed millionaire. There was an Armenian family on the floor above them, the Varandians. They had saved Ali Begoff in the last Tartar massacre and taken him into their house; now they were given asylum in return. It was quite a common deal in Baku. No doubt it was well known in the town where the Varandians were. But they were safe enough. No one would lay hands on them so long as they remained under Ali Begoff's roof. Willow's was a different case, and this was a point Borujian, remembering past indignities, emphasised with some malice. A British officer without uniform, an agent, a spy, was a dangerous guest to harbour during the Turkish occupation.

Willow admitted his undesirability as a guest. He hoped that Ali Begoff would become an accessory to his removal. Oil kings, as a rule, command shipping.

Nazarbegoff returned, and with an enigmatic smile invited them to follow. "There are some friends of yours upstairs," he said. They followed him up to the second landing. He threw open a door, and there, standing in the middle of the room amidst a group of excited Armenians, they saw Babyan and Dawson.

The two Englishmen greeted one another with a smile and a "Hullo," as if the meeting were the most natural thing

in the world; Babyan crossed the room and gripped Willow by the hand. "The Turks are finished," he said, in his loud emphatic whisper.

"They are quitting," Dawson amended.

"Quitting! Why? Where?"

"Our fellows are taking over."

"Taking over! What do you mean? Where are the troops? A brigade at the most at Enzeli."

"It's quite true; the old Turkey-Cock is finished. Marshall is at Mosul, Allenby at Aleppo. They've signed an Armistice. Thomson is coming over from Enzeli."

"Do the people know?"

"Only Nuri and his staff, but there are wild rumours. Babyan had the news from Erivan. We got here this morning, trekked across the steppe in four days."

Willow was still incredulous. He noticed that the Armenians had crowded to the window, Babyan among them, visible to all the world, careless of concealment. A Turkish battery was passing in the street underneath. They did not heed it. Their eyes were strained across the Caspian.

Dawson pointed to a thin wisp of smoke on the horizon. "That is probably Thomson," he said. It was a very thin wisp—a very long way off.

"Did the Turks attack the camp?"

"I should think they did. It was at dawn two days after you left. A whole battalion came along and we wiped the floor with them. We counted thirty dead on the slope, our machine-guns were perfectly sited, fire discipline not half bad. They had three mountain guns with them, but we were dug in deep and narrow. Their shells did not touch us. Total casualties on our side—one killed and three slightly wounded."

"Did they come on again?"

"No. All quiet after that. They did not even hang around. I used to go shooting with old Babyan. He raised me a scatter-gun. Not a bad shot himself. I was astonished; he shoots flying."

Willow felt that the Armenians were vindicated by that scatter-gun. The race had proved themselves through Babyan.

"Do you remember," he asked his friend, "how unreasonably annoyed you were that the Armenians should have a paper called 'Ararat'?"

"Yes," Dawson said; "they are a poor crowd, these intelligentsia! But it's the same everywhere, in Russia and India, in Ireland—everywhere the thin partition between Babuism and Barbarism. But there's backbone somewhere. I should like to have some of Babyan's lot to knock into shape, to form a battalion out of. As for these poor devils who are always getting themselves massacred, you must remember . . ." But Willow, thinking all the while of Borujian and the adhesive physician, interrupted his friend's apologia absent-mindedly. "Yes, I know," he said with unconscious plagiarism, "but one cannot always

be making allowances for the way people have been brought up."

"We'll bring them up differently. No more massacres."

A high harsh voice behind Willow's shoulder made him start, a voice associated in his mind with puffy cheeks and an indescribably shifty movement of the eye.

"Captain Willow, Captain Dawson, permit me to have the pleasure to introduce to you Mr Varandian."

The group at the window had broken up. The babble of voices in the room was still, and the unusual silence gave the introduction a ceremonial dignity. Borujian's outstretched palm indicated a little thin man in black, with a telescope in his hand. Varandian was all white shirt front and black cravat, from his waistcoat pocket upwards, so thin that his face and narrow black beard looked like an elongation of his tie, his hooked nose like an exaggerated pin.

Babyan stood detached, apart from the group, his burly weathered figure merely incidental. Varandian, the elected spokesman of the race, took two short steps forward.

"The Armenians," he said, bowing to Dawson and Willow, "congratulate their English Allies. The British fleet is visible now on the horizon." And he handed Dawson a telescope.

Dawson took it and focussed it on the growing wisp of smoke to the south of the harbour. "A white ensign," he remarked after what seemed an interminable scrutiny. "And out there on the right a Union Jack. The Lord be praised; it's our fellows from Enzeli."

"GREEN BALLS."

BY PAUL BEWSHER.

VII.

TRAGEDY.

"No gold of poetry will deck this tale,
This gloomy record of an awful night;
With pleasant words my fear I will not veil
Or hide the horrors of the fatal flight.

So all seemed peace to us as we flew on,
When suddenly the hand of heartless fate
Passed lightly over us, and then was gone,
But it had left a legacy of hate."

—*The Ordeal.*

"TO-NIGHT an attempt is going to be made to sink blocking vessels, filled with cement, in the harbour mouths at Ostend and Zeebrugge. It is intended, as a distraction, to land specially trained men on the Mole, where they are going to burn down and destroy everything they can.

"The whole plan has been under consideration for weeks, and has been carefully worked out. We have been given the task of lending assistance by two methods—by desultory bombing, and by dropping flares. I have here a number of cards—one for each machine. On these cards are given the exact details of the duty given to that machine. If you follow them exactly the aerial operations will work without a hitch. Roughly, the idea is like this: from 10 o'clock till 1 A.M. machines will be bombing Zeebrugge Mole and Batteries incessantly—as one machine finishes, another will carry on. Then, beginning from one o'clock—when the bombing parties will be attacking the Mole—you will begin to drop parachute flares to help the people on the ground to see what they are doing. A great flare will be lit on a vessel twenty miles north-west of Ostend to show that up to then operations are proceeding satisfactorily, and also as a final check for time.

"This is a great opportunity for the Squadron. The work given to us, if carried out satisfactorily, will be of enormous value to the Naval units. I know I can rely on you to do what is required. Now this is the list of the machines: First machine—Pilot, J. R. Allan, Observer, P. Bewsher—bombs Zeebrugge Mole from 10.30 to 11.30—drops flares at 1 o'clock. . . ."

The Wing Commander reads on his orders in the crowded mapping office. When the

long and detailed list is completed, we pour out into the twilight, wildly excited. Long had the secret been kept: no one knew much of the plans.

The first thought which came to my mind was that of the marines and sailors, somewhere out there in the chilly North Sea, who were in a few hours to steam into an absolute inferno of death. I felt how terrible would be my feelings if I had been one of them—and they were volunteers. Then comes as a light relief the thought of the solitary German sentry at the tip of the Mole, and the rude shock he was going to have. Then the pilot to whom I was allotted claimed my attention.

He was a freckled, red-headed youth, brave, fearless, capable—easily the most popular man in the squadron—a pilot with a wonderful reputation as a night bomber; he had behind him the record of innumerable successful raids, when, in spite of all difficulty, he had successfully driven home the attack. He was a Canadian from Montreal, and the finest man I had met in the services. I was proud to have been given the opportunity to act as his observer.

He joined me with my own pilot "Jimmy," now acting as Squadron Commander, and so, to his chagrin, unable to take part in this raid.

"Here's Paul! Well, what do you think of it?"

"Hum! I've never been to Zeebrugge. An hour over the Mole sounds pretty beastly. What I don't like though is that wait—eleven-thirty to one—that sounds pretty foul to me!"

"Jimmy!" he says, turning to my pilot, "I have got the wind up! I don't know why! I don't like the idea somehow. I tell you frankly I'm windy about it!"

"That's funny!" I remark. "I nearly always have the wind up—you ask Jimmy—but I haven't to-night. I am rather looking forward to it. Of course I have the usual cold feet, like I do before every raid, but nothing bad. I reckon I'll be all right with *you!*"

Only a week ago I was in a convalescent home at Peebles in remote Scotland, amidst the fir-clad hills, and now in the wide shadowy plains of Northern France I prepare to start for a fierce night of midnight attack and hostile defence over Zeebrugge.

To-night we are to fire no "carry-on" light, for whatever the weather may be the raid must be carried out to assist the naval attack from the sea.

A mist lies over the sea and land, and scarcely in the darkness can we see the black line of the shore. A red and a green light glows in the mist at Nieuport and fades. It is the first "hostile aircraft" signal of the night, which little the Germans know is going to be such a frenzied one and so devoid of rest. Again at Ostend glow the lurid signals in the mist, and

again near Blankenberghe. It is only ten. Not yet can we fly on to Zeebrugge. We decide to fly right out to sea past the Dutch frontier, to turn in over the border, and come back to Zeebrugge a few miles inland from the coast.

At Zeebrugge glow red and green flares. We have been heard far out to sea. Two searchlights shoot up into the sky, and stand slim sentinels of blue-white light, undecided in the mist. The pilot throttles slightly and turns the machine out to sea. It is not intended that too early in the evening should Zeebrugge be excited. Looking behind, I see that the two searchlights have been extinguished. The suspicions which we aroused have been allayed. Ten minutes past ten now. We turn to the right and begin to fly in towards the Belgo-Dutch frontier. At twenty minutes past ten we are nearly over the land, and I can just see the little creek which marks the boundary-line. We make a few wide circles in order to pass away the time, and then, at twenty-three minutes past ten we turn west and begin to fly towards Zeebrugge over the land.

Upwards stabs a searchlight, and then another and another. Eight or more of them move across the sky before us. I cannot see the coast. The sea and the land is welded into one dim whole by the dark mist. This makes my task difficult, for one searchlight seems to be stationed much too far to the right to be on the coast, and I wonder whether it is on the tip of the Mole or on some patrol-boat.

The pilot throttles the engines, and we begin to glide downwards. I am not anxious about the poor visibility, because I know well that to-night the importance of our bomb-dropping lies not so much in its destructive value as in its moral effect. Keeping my eye on two powerful searchlights close together, which I feel sure are at the base of the Mole, I peer through the door in the bottom of the machine and steer the pilot with the signal-buttons. Never have I been to Zeebrugge before, and the prospect has ever seemed so alarming that now in actuality I am not as afraid as I expected. Nearer and nearer to the wide moving beams of white light we move. I hear the scarcely-revolving engines clanking slightly to either side of me, and I can feel the gentle rise and fall of the machine in a long slow glide. A string of vivid green balls suddenly rises up from the ground and lights up an expanse of sea and the shadowy line of the sand-dunes. In front of us they rise, for which I am grateful, as they give me a guide to my position.

Now the bases of the two swinging pillars of light which I have taken as my mark lie beneath my bomb-sight. I press the bomb-handle forward slightly, and climb up leisurely beside the pilot.

We glide sedate and silent between these tall blades of light which only move slightly. We can scarcely be heard, and so they do not know quite what to do. Far below flashes our first bomb. Each searchlight jerks into sudden movement. A long string of green balls climbs dutifully up to our left, and falls gracefully over and expires. I lean lazily and singularly unafraid, in my seat, watching the vast scene of midnight activity with a languid interest.

We cross the coast-line again near the Dutch frontier, and turn over the sea towards Zeebrugge. Then begins a wild hour. Somehow to-night we feel that nothing can touch us. We feel that we can in safety take any risks. Again and again we fly into Zeebrugge. Through the mist the great white beams stagger and wheel and sweep and wait. For once they do not terrify me. In the haze I see the quick flashes of the guns, and shell after shell bursts in a barrage over the Mole. In the ghostly light of the incessant green balls I see the round puffs of the shell-bursts, actually touching each other in a long line, so closely together are they placed as a barrier.

We drop two bombs over the Mole at a low height, and, pursued by the malignant searchlights and the rapid ineffectual flashes of the shells, swing out to sea, turn in once more, and drop another bomb. Again and again we do this, and so madly excited and conscious of safety do I feel that I fire a bright light after each attack to show my contempt of the defences. As the red or the green light drifts down I see the searchlights leap over towards it, and far below, above the shining waters, appears a great white star-shell which the nervous and uneasy Germans have fired over the sea, evidently feeling that to-night there may be some unexpected trouble from below as well as from above.

In one of these quick tip-and-run attacks I lie gazing happily through the square trap-door, and see a string of green balls rise towards me from the centre of the Mole. As they rise they light up the whole of its dim curve, and I see that, instead of the usual boom of four anchored barges at its tip, to-night there are eight.

In a second I am beside the pilot.

"Roy! You know those four barges — off the tip of the Mole? Well, there are eight to-night! Don't you think we should go back at once and have it 'wirelessed' to the fleet so that the block ships know? We could be back in time for our flare stunt!"

He shakes his head.

"No! We better carry on now. It would probably be too late; and anyway, maybe they know!"

So I return to my scene of operations on the floor, and drop my last two bombs near the Mole. Our work over

for the time being, we turn out to sea. As we move away, we see the shape of another great Handley-Page pass exactly over us as it flies on to attack Zeebrugge Mole for another hour. Our place is taken at once. The attack is being carried out, as arranged, in exact detail.

Now, some ten miles from the unseen land we fly up and down on a two-mile beat or so, waiting for the laggard minutes to pass. A few wan stars shine sparely through the mirk, which ever grows thicker and thicker around us. Now and again I see a misty chain of green balls rise up in the distance, gleaming palely in the haze. Here and there, too, move the weak beams of the searchlights. At last it is one o'clock, and towards the north our steadfast gaze is turned as we await the great flare which should record in a moment of dazzling light the imminence of the terrific conflict that so soon is to take place. Far, far below in that dim waste of sea, unseen yet somehow felt, the great fleet of vessels must be drawing nearer and nearer, and these brave men must be standing on the decks ready to die. A few minutes pass, and then suddenly the pilot utters a cry.

"Look! The starboard engine's boiling!"

At once the clamour of the engine ceases, and I look quickly to the radiator on the right, from the top of which is blown backwards a thin streak of white water and steam. As the engine cools through inaction, the ill-boding wisp of spray lessens and dies. Carefully, slowly, and with an evident anxiety, the pilot pushes forward the throttle, and the engines open out with a growing roar. On the little cap of the starboard radiator our eyes are fixed. Slowly the slender white scarf appears again, and grows wider and more evident in the darkness. It is the pale finger of doom. . . .

"We better go back at once!" he says, and turns the machine towards the west.

With engines partly throttled we begin to glide slowly downwards. I stand up and peer below into the murk in an effort to distinguish the distant coast-line. The night is too thick, however, and I can see nothing.

The long slow glide continues. For a little while no anxiety ruffles the calm of my brain. I look vaguely at the compass, an instrument whose red and blue face has long been unfamiliar to me. I look at the height indicator, at the watch, and then gaze unperturbed below me to the black emptiness of mist. Suddenly I realise we are only four thousand feet above the sea, and are ignorant of our position. At that moment we sink into an enveloping haze, half cloud, half mist. Below, above, to right and left, we can see nothing—no stars, no light, no dim dark line of land. We steer towards the west, and anxiously I watch the height indicator. For ten un-

easy minutes we move through this vapoury blackness, and then break through it. Two thousand five hundred feet, says the height indicator.

"I say, Roy, what shall we do? I can't see anything below. I don't know where we are at all!"

"Drop a flare, Paul," he replies very calmly.

I crawl into the back, and, pushing forward a small metal lever fixed to the side of the machine, I hurry forwards to my seat and look below. Suddenly a light bursts into brilliancy beneath us, and I can see a ball of white fire hanging below a frail white parachute. By this quivering illumination is lit up a circle of cold oily water. We are still over the sea.

"Sea, Roy! What shall we do. I can see no lights. I don't know where we are!"

Two thousand feet records the height indicator.

"Drop another flare . . . we will be all right, old man!" says the splendid pilot.

Again I crawl into the back and push forward a lever. Again bursts out a light beneath a little parachute. Again I see below a dim circle of cruel, cold, waiting sea. All round us lies the damp empty mist. Far, far away I can see the white beam of a searchlight, but whether it be on land or on a boat I cannot tell. All I know is that it is too far distant to allow us to reach it.

Again, at fifteen hundred feet, I drop a parachute flare. An icy fear is creeping over my body now. Below, in the light of the third flare, still lies the sea. We must glide down helplessly into the water, in the darkness, and die. . . .

"Oh, Roy! . . . Look! A boat!"

"Yes! I see it! I am going to land near it."

"But supposing it is a blockship going into Ostend?"

"Fire white lights as quick as you can!" is his order.

For a moment we have seen in the pallid light of one of the hanging flares the wide shape of a boat moving slowly through the sea, leaving a broad white wake behind it. Near it, from one or more points, long, thin, smaller wreaths of white vapour lie across the water, and are evidently a smoke-screen.

Feverishly I begin to load my Very's light pistol, and fire it — load and fire — and white ball of light after white ball drops and dies, drops and dies. Just over the top of the masts of the huge ship we sweep, and below I can see its decks, with all the orderly complication of a boat's fittings, clear in the light of one of the flares.

"*Help! Help! Help! Help!* . . ." I scream with every ounce of my strength in a long unending succession of pleading cries, leaning far over the side.

"We will be all right! Cheer up, old man!" says the pilot, smiling at me. "We will be all right! Drop all the flares. . . ."

I rush into the back, and push over quickly all the little

levers by the side of the machine. I climb forwards into my seat, and see that we are only twenty feet or so from the water, which lies swelling and heaving with an oily heartless calm all round us, lit up by the wavering light of the parachute flares. For a moment I see the sides of a ship on the right sweep past us and vanish. Then I realise we are just above the sea, which now streaks below us: I see the two whirling discs of the propeller on either side; I put one foot on my seat . . . ready. . . .

CRASH! Crack—splinter—hiss—there is a sudden, swift, tremendous noise and splash of water, and I feel myself whirling over and over, spread-eagle-wise, through the air. I hit the water with a terrible impact . . . there is a white jagged flash of fire in my brain, I feel the sudden agony of a fearful blow . . . and sensation ends.

I become conscious of an utter fear. In sodden flying clothes, now terribly heavy, I find myself being dragged under the water as though some sea-monster were gripping my ankles and pulling me under the water. My head sinks beneath the surface, and, inspired by an absolute terror, I frantically beat out my hands. I realise in a swift vivid second that I am going to die—that this is the end. As my head rises again I become conscious of the oil-glittering surface of the sea, shining strangely in the light of the three flickering parachute flares which hang above me like three altar-lamps of death. Here, in the irresistible weight of these soaked clothes, only semi-conscious and quite hysterical, I begin a ceaseless, piteous wail. "Help! Help! . . ."

In my weakness I sink again below the water, and thrust out my arms wildly to keep myself up, panting furiously, and crying for help.

Some twenty feet or so away the top wing of the machine lies out of the water at an angle, a dark high wall a hundred feet along. Inspired into frantic energy by my sheer dread of dying, I begin to fling myself along the surface of the water with the insane strength of despair. I kick out my heavy legs, so cumbered with the great leather flying boots and huge fur-lined overalls. Frenziedly I beat my arms. Again and again I sink. Nearer and nearer grows the shining surface of the tight fabric.

"Oh! Help! Help!"

Under the water goes my agony-twisted mouth. Again I rise and resume the unending cry to the empty night.

At last I reach the wing and begin to beat vainly upon its smooth steep surface with my sodden leather gloves. There is nothing on which I can grip, and with an ever-growing weakness I drag my hands down, down, down its wet slope like a drowning dog at the edge of a quay. It seems awful to die so near some kind of help. Kicking my legs out I manage to move along the wing and at last come to the

hinge, where the wing is folded back when not in use, and there I find a small square opening into which I can thrust my hand.

With a feeling of immense relief I let my body sink down into the water. One hand and my head are above the surface. So weak am I, and so heavy my water-soaked flying clothes, that I can scarce hold up my weight. Across my battered face is plastered the fur of my flying cap. My strength is so rapidly ebbing away that I know that in but a few minutes I will have to leave go and drown unless I am helped. So once again I send my sad wail across the cruel shining waters. Now and again I hear a deep dull boom sound across the sea, and I presume that somewhere a monitor is shelling the German coast.

Now I suddenly see sitting astride the top of the plane, some nine or ten feet above me, a muffled figure. I think at once that my pilot is saved and begin to shout out—

"Hello! Roy! I can't hang on! Oh! I can't hang on! What shall I do? Is any one coming? Is there any chance? . . . I'm drowning, I'm drowning!"

"Hang on if you can!" comes the encouraging answer. "There is a boat coming!"

My strength, however, has almost gone, and it is an effort even to hold up my head above the water.

Now does reason whisper to me to leave go. You have got to die one day, it says, and if you sink down now and drown you will suffer scarcely at all. Since you have suffered such agony already, why not drift away easily to dim sleep and the awakening dreams of the new life. Leave go, it whispers, leave go. Tempted, I listen to the voice, and agree with it. Shall I leave go, I ask myself; and then instinct, the never absent impulse of life, cries out, "*No! Hang on!*" and I hang on with renewed strength inspired by the dread of approaching death.

"Hang on, hang on! The boat is coming up!" shouts the man above me.

"Oh! what are they doing! I can't hang on any longer!"

"They're lowering a boat—hang on—they'll be here soon!" encourages the watcher on the wing.

Changing hands I turn round quickly, and vaguely see in the darkness a motor-launch or some such boat, twenty feet or so away.

"Hurry, hurry, *hurry!*" I yell, dreading that my strength may give out in these last moments of waiting. It seems utterly wonderful that I may be saved. I realise how fortunate it is that the machine is floating. If it were to sink but a foot or two, and the little hole through which my hand is thrust were to go under the water with it, then I should not be able to hold myself up, and would soon die. Still sound the roar of near-by explosions: still shines the smooth cruel sea around me: still float the quivering flares

above; then I here the glorious sound of a voice crying—

"Where are you? Give us a hail so that we can find you!"

"Here—*here!* Hanging on the wing! Do come quickly—*do* come—I can't hang on any longer."

I hear the splash of oars, and then two strong arms slip under my armpits, and I am dragged up to the edge of the boat. I am utterly weak and can use no muscle at all, so for a moment or two they struggle with me, and then I fall over the side on to the floor, where I lie, a sodden, streaming, half-dead thing.

"Save my pal! Save my pal!" I cry.

Down the wing slides the other man, and suddenly I see it is not the pilot at all, but the back gun-layer.

"Where's Roy? *Where's Roy?*" I shout in a sudden dread.

"He never came up!" is the terrible answer.

"Oh! Save my pilot! Save my pilot!" I call out, bursting into sobs, partly with hysteria at the ending of the strain, partly with utter grief. "He was a wonderful chap . . . one of the best . . . one of the best. Save him! Oh! Do save him! He can't be dead! *Roy!* Roy! He was the best chap there—ever—was."

It is too late. We are lucky to be picked up at all, for it is against regulations. The row-boat goes back to the little grey motor-launch which is protecting the monitor with a smoke screen, and must go on at once. We are pulled on board. An anxious-eyed and evidently very busy naval officer comes to me.

"Are you wounded or anything?" he asks. "No? Good! I am so sorry we cannot wait to look for the other man. Go down to our cabin and get into blankets. I will send some whisky down! That noise? No! It's not the monitor. It is fifteen-inch shrapnel shell being fired at us from Ostend!"

"Where are you going—anywhere near Dunkerque?" I ask.

"Yes! Going back now with the monitor! The stunt's washed out—bad weather!"

"*Washed out!* All wasted, all wasted. Oh! Roy! Roy!"

I crawl down a ladder and slowly, painfully, take off my heavy flying clothes. In a pool of water they lie on the floor, a sodden heap of leather and fur. Looking in the glass, I see an unfamiliar distorted face with a great enormous cheek, and wet hair plastered about the forehead.

Luckily the other man is not touched or damaged, and has been scarcely even wet, so he lies more or less at ease in his bunk. This is his first raid. He seems to assume that this terrible calamity is more or less a normal occurrence. Soon I am lying in blankets with a glass of whisky inside me. The mad panorama of the night goes rushing through my brain in ever-changing vivid scenes.

"Purvis! Are you awake?" I call to the bunk on the opposite side.

"Yes!"

"I say, you know—we are very very lucky. We have escaped every kind of death in a few seconds. If I were you I would say a prayer or two!"

"I have, old man!"

"Say one for Roy too, won't you. Poor Roy—he was great! He never said a word of fear to the last. He never lost his head or anything!"

So in pain of body and mind I toss and turn in the little cabin with its swinging light, and hear the throb of the motor start and stop, increase and lessen, through long hours, till, for a while, I drift into an uneasy sleep. . . .

Zoop! Zoop! Suddenly sounds the old familiar sound of Mournful Mary bellowing with fear. *Boom!* sounds a loud explosion.

I sit up in my blankets and shout across to the other bunk. "Mournful Mary! We must be back."

"I say, old man! Hear that! It's Leugenboom firing! I can't stand 15-inch shells on the docks this morning—let's get up and dress!"

After a while we borrow an assorted collection of naval garments, and at last climb on to the deck. It is a glorious sunny morning, and we lie in the middle of a little flotilla of neat grey-painted motor launches lying side by side up to the tall stone wall of one of the docks. I can find no naval officer to thank, so walk from boat to boat till we reach the little iron ladder set in the quay-side, which we crawl up with difficulty till we are on the hot stone above. We start walking into Dunkerque, the back gun-layer in socked feet; myself with bare head, hair over my eyes, and back stooped in pain.

It is a strange walk. We are amidst civilisation, as it were, and people look curiously at us. I stop a naval car. The driver pulls up with evident reluctance.

"We are two naval flying-officers—have just come down out to sea off Ostend—we are not well—can you give us a lift?"

"No, sir! Ration car!" In goes the clutch, away moves the car and its smart, rather contemptuous, driver.

I stop another car. Again in an unfamiliar voice I begin my recitation—

"We are two naval flying-officers—have just . . ."

"Sorry, sir—got to fetch the mails!"

No one will help us. No car will give us assistance, though we are obviously in trouble. Too far away from these people is war for them to realise that from war's greatest menace we have just escaped.

We go into the French police office at the docks. There by the kindly uniformed officials we are courteously treated. They, at least, make an attempt to telephone through to our squadron.

Tired at the delay, feeling I must move and move through this unreal city of sunshine and order, which lies so strangely about the dim shadows of my soul, I go on, and, stopping a car, order the

driver to take me to the Wing Headquarters. The car is full of chairs, which are being taken to some concert hall, and perhaps the driver realises vaguely that the service does eventually touch reality, that there is some remote possibility of accident, some remote chance of calamity, up there, "towards the lines."

Through the dirty but splendidly familiar streets of Dunkerque we drive, out through the fortification to the pink and white villas of Malo. I am driving to the Wing Headquarters first, because I feel that a report should be made at once to the Wing Commander.

We turn at last through a great stone gate, and circling round a drive, stop at the bottom of a flight of steps, up which I slowly climb. By the door stands an orderly.

"Where's the—Wing Commander — Mr — Fowler — I — want—anybody?"

"In the breakfast-room, sir —just down on the left," he says.

I walk down the passage with a strange feeling of fear. Now I have returned to some definite place, to an organisation which can comprehend me, the ending of the strain is bringing a strange dizziness.

I open the tall door and enter.

Two officers at their breakfast table look at me, and then slowly stand up in utter amazement with opening mouths and wide eyes. In a second of time I see the broken egg-shell on the plate, the carelessly folded napkins, a half-empty toast-rack.

"Bewsher! Paul! Why—why—where have you been?"

"Haven't you heard? Hasn't — didn't the Moniter tell you?" I asked dully.

"No. This is the first we have seen of you. Oh! I am glad you are all right. Where's Roy?"

"Roy. Roy? Oh! He's dead, dead—dead—in the sea —drowned in the wreck. . . ." And throwing myself on a seat, I drop my face on to my arms on the table and burst into sobs, which shake my weary frame to the bones as the scalding tears well from my tired bruised eyes.

Follows in my memory picture after picture—of lying for a few hours in my little bed in the familiar cabin at the aerodome, and of Jimmy bending over me with his face drawn with anxiety, telling me of the tragedy of the night, of Bob and Jack missing, of machines crashing: of the Friends Hospital at Dunkerque in a little wood where we awoke at dawn to hear the thunder of the 15-inch shells bursting on the docks: of the Red Cross city at Étaples: of yet another hospital in the green silence of Eaton Square: of convalescence in the dream-garden of a great house in Buckinghamshire.

One night I rode into Paddington and found Jack Hudson awaiting me. Three months was it since I had dined with him on the tragic night of April 10. He told me how, an hour after my accident, he had landed with a shell-shat-

tered engine in Holland; he had struck a canal at 75 miles an hour, and had been upside down under water with his feet fixed on the wreckage, and his machine had caught fire on top of him, and how by burrowing down into the mud he had managed to free himself and to escape. Unchanged by our experiences which we related as interesting stories, we wandered happily along the twilight streets.

Infinitely remote, like a scarce-remembered dream, is the war to me to-day. I seem ever to have been a civilian, ever to have strolled at ease down sunlit terraces of London through the drowsy hours of an English spring—but every night with the slow approach of azure twilight I feel a strange stirring in my heart. As the first primrose star blooms in the east, I seem to hear the roar of starting engines, and when, in cold and sublime beauty, a silver moon rides high in the vast immensity of the night, I yearn with an almost unbearable pain to be once more sitting far above a magic moonlit world, to be moving ever onwards through the dim sky, where here and there the white waiting arms of the searchlights swoop and linger amidst the stars; where, beautiful and enchanted, there rises in the distance a long curving chain of green twinkling balls.

Dusk is our dawn, and midnight is our noon!
And for the sun we have the radiant moon.
We love the darkness, and we hate the light,
For we are wedded to the gloomy night.

THE BIBI.

AFTER its disastrous grab at Tanga in November 1914, Indian Expeditionary Force "B" was fain to regain its ships and crawl away northwards to our own port of Mombasa, to lick its wounds and devote itself to the defence of British East Africa.

The enemy, after the very natural indulgence in a few ecstatic war-whoops over the unexpected discovery that their negro *askaris* were quite able to stand up to the Indian sepoy, set busily to work to quadruple their black army, covering this operation by a vigorous policy along the common border.

This mutual frontier of the two East Africas is a purely arbitrary line drawn from a point on the Indian Ocean, north-west to the shores of Victoria Nyanza. Two railways run parallel to it, the German Tanga-Moshi line some fifty miles to the south, and our Uganda Railway, about the same distance to the north. Between lies a horrid land of rock and dense thorn scrub, all but entirely waterless. True to their best tactical traditions, our enemies did not content themselves with a passive defence of *their* edge of this wilderness. Patrols and raiding parties constantly invaded our territory, to snipe posts and bomb bridge, train, and culvert on the Uganda Railway, the long and vulnerable backbone of our colony. Now, questions of water rendered certain avenues of approach more popular than others in this good work, and one of these was the valley of the Tsavo river, running directly from the frontier to our railway, which crossed it by a large and important bridge.

To discourage enterprises in this quarter, the head of the valley—which was well in the middle of the debatable land—was blocked by us with an outpost, called Mzima. This fort entailed subsidiary posts between it and home, and the whole "Tsavo Line" was garrisoned by the remnants of several Indian Units, who soon gained an intimate acquaintance with fever and dysentery.

John Savage, Captain of the Indian Medical Service, had sailed from India with the "Bahadurs," and presently found himself in medical charge of Mzima fort and the appurtenances thereof. It was a horrible corner of "British East," vastly different from the open and healthy highlands a hundred miles farther west, to which the colony owes its reputation as a "White Man's Country." The Tsavo river, fed from the glaciers of Kilimanjaro within hostile territory, rushed, deep and narrow as a canal, in and out between rocky ridges, uniformly clothed in dense thorn jungle, and utterly destitute of human inhabitants.

To supply the Mzima gar-

rison and the intermediate supporting posts, a two-foot-wide porter track had been driven through this bush, and ran with heart-breaking directness up and down across the stony spurs round which the river squirmed. On either hand of this "road" stood a ten-foot wall of neutral-tinted thorn-bush, varied only by the hideous baobab, or the forked and shadeless hyphenæ palm. Thick though the bush seemed, it was by no means impenetrable. Frequent game-trails intersected it, the tracks by which the beasts of the forest made their way to drink at the river. In the dry dust of the road was recorded each night the fresh spoor of rhino and elephant, hyæna and panther. The wayfarer, surprised by darkness, was well advised to guard himself with bonfire and thorn zariba, in whose protection he could listen to the lions roaring after their prey, and perhaps dimly realise the life of prehistoric man.

On a certain April afternoon deep peace lay on Mzima fort, which crowned a small hill embraced on three sides by the Tsavo. The garrison of Indian sepoys and African levies dozed in the scanty shade of the parapets, while a lonely sentry, ensconced in a shelter above the single gate, stared westwards across the dead sea of bush. In front of him, forty miles distant, the huge bulk of Kilimanjaro seemed to raise its glittering ice-cap half-way to the zenith, while a range of jagged, black, volcanic hills bounded the horizon to the north. In the grass hut, which served as mess, sat Savage — who had just returned from a three days' journey down the road — and Jones, the O.C. of the "Bahadurs."

"The Huns seem to be easing off a bit on this line," at length remarked the former with a yawn; "we haven't had any word of a raiding party for over a week — not since they murdered that sentry at Tembo."

"Well, I'm making no complaint over that," replied the soldier — "it's a hopeless job trying to catch them. They just vanish down a game-trail into the bush, and then my fellows might as well try to catch rats in the dark. The local African has a heavy pull over the sepoy in his kit, if in nothing else: you couldn't devise anything less suitable than the Sikh's enormous turban for barging head first through a thorn-bush, and what chance has a man in boots against one barefoot!"

"Talking of that affair at Tembo," resumed the doctor, "what do you make of the *gup* among the men that there was a white woman with the enemy? They call her 'The Bibi' among themselves."

"I don't know what to think; none of our people have ever *seen* her, that's certain, anyhow. The rumour started from the spoor of a woman's shoe being found among that of the barefoot *askaris*. I

haven't seen even that, but O'Brien swears to it, and says you're sure to find it wherever there's been any specially dirty bit of work. He'll even tell you the lady's name—but then, you know what O'Brien is!"

"I do so," replied Savage; "you want a whole salt-cellar with some of his yarns! He's got a personal spite against the Huns, as he used to get his living elephant-poaching in German East, till they made it too hot for him."

"Yes, he's a tough nut, but since he hates Fritz like poison and knows the native inside out, he's just the man for the Intelligence job. He's out now, trying to get across to a village on the side of the mountain and see what news he can pick up. I didn't half like it, so I sent young Ayling and a party of my lads with him as far as Useri ford, to halt there and give him something to fall back on, if he has to run for it. They ought to be in to-night."

The sun sank to rest behind the throne of Ngai, who (the Masai say) sits ever amid the snows of the White Mountain, and in its last rays the eternal ice-cap shone out—

> "Blazing, amazing—aglow
> 'Twixt the sky-line's belting beryl
> And the wine-dark flats below."

The dark came swiftly; cooking fires glowed within the post, while the acrid smell of *huqqa* smoke contended with the mephitic breath of a camp incinerator wafted across the fort by the night wind.

A loud challenge from the look-out above the gate was followed by a sudden silence and the shuffle of feet as the inlying picket moved hurriedly to their posts. However, the reply was unmistakably British, and presently the clatter of ammunition boots ascended the stony path to the gateway.

"That must be Ayling's lot," remarked Jones. "Hi, boy, get some dinner ready for the *Bwanas!* I suppose O'Brien's with him all right? Oh, here he is! Hullo, old bird, safe back again? Where's Ayling?"

A lanky figure, simply clad in a ragged bush-shirt, with a pair of slacks flapping some inches above the tops of its veldschoen (for your true big-game hunter despises shorts and riding breeches equally), entered the circle of candlelight. Leaning a sporting ·303 up in a corner, it dropped into a chair and briefly replied, "Gone West, poor devil!"

"What?" cried Jones, starting up—"not dead?"

"Yes—dead and mutilated, with another of your *Wahindi*.[1] I don't know rightly what happened, as I wasn't there, and I can't talk to your jokers. But I brought the rest of them back with me, so you'd better have in your Effendi and we'll see what we can make of it."

"The Effendi" (otherwise Jemadar Ragbir Singh of the Bahadurs) having been sum-

[1] Wahindi = the East African term for Indians.

moned, O'Brien began: "I left Ayling and his party at Useri as arranged, while I went on to do my job at Rembe. Before we parted, I told him that he had better lie up in the bush so as to watch the drift, and warned him not to move till I got back. I did my job (which will keep for the present), and returned to Useri to find poor Ayling and another man laid out under blankets, and the rest of them with the wind fairly up. I couldn't make out what your Effendi was trying to tell me till he took me about a mile out into the bush. What had happened there was plain enough from the spoor—and other things; but what I want to know is how Ayling and the other man got out there alone.

This having been duly translated to the Jemadar, he took up the tale in Urdu: "Yes, it is true that the Iskoot (scout) Sahib left us in ambush at the ford. This was in the evening. Ayling Sahib said, 'Now, *jowans*, we must wait here till Iskoot Sahib comes back. Do not make a fire. Do not *bukh*. Should any enemy come to the ford, be ready to shoot.' So we lay down and it became dark. It was cold. We heard the voice of many lions who came to drink. Towards morning the Sahib fired at one who would not let us be. When it was light, behold, there was much blood. The Sahib said, 'See, he is hard hit, and surely lies dying near by. You remain here, Jemadar Sahib, with the *jowans*. I will follow the blood trail a little way to see.' So, calling his orderly, Lal Singh, to follow him, he went. After a little while we heard two, four shots and an outcry far off. So I took ten men and followed swiftly. Aiyo! I found my Sahib lying in the bush dead. Lal Singh also. Both were mutilated. Is this the work of men or devils? Of the enemy no sign, save footprints in the dust. So, after a little, we carried our Sahib and the other back to the ford and waited till the Iskoot Sahib returned."

"So that is how it was!" exclaimed O'Brien in disgust—"went off on his own and bumped a Hun patrol. They probably came to camp by the water during the night. Ayling's shot would have given the show away, even if they hadn't spotted his party before. So they jackalled it and murdered him when he strolled out in the morning. Then they cleared, of course. Well, from the spoor there were six *askaris* there, and—the Bibi! Same old track of a woman's boot. After I'd seen Ayling's body, I would have sworn we'd find it. Can you beat it? Well, doctor, you'd better have a look at the bodies, so that you'll be able to swear to it after. They're outside."

Half an hour later Savage was back in the mess, reviving himself with a drink after a sight that he had not seen since the last war on the Indian Frontier.

"Another notch up against the Bibi," remarked O'Brien, "mutilation and robbery this

time! You saw that one of Ayling's fingers was gone? That would be to get off the Zodiac ring[1] he used to wear. It was mine once: I got it years ago in Accra, but as he took a fancy to it, I traded it to him a while back. It will be a poor day for any man or woman that I find with *that* ring on them! There wouldn't be another of the sort this side of Africa, and it's got my initials inside, anyway."

"And who *is* 'the Bibi'?" asked Savage. "It's incredible that any white woman would do such a devilish thing, though it is common form with the hags of the Indian Frontier. She must be a mental case!"

"Mad as a coot," said O'Brien. "My gun-bearer, Mbaraki, who did a guy from German East early in the war, says it is 'the Bibi Ashirini.' That's the native name of a certain Frau von König. He says it is well known that, after her husband and son got scuppered by us at Tanga, she swore by all her gods to cut up any Britisher she caught. Some of my other boys know the lady too, and say she is '*kali sana*' (very fierce), and could knock down a man with her fist. Well, if ever we get into German East, I'm going to pay a call on Frau von König, if I haven't dropped across her before that. If I find my ring on her, she's for the high jump *marra moja!*"[2]

II.

The long year 1915, spent by the British Forces in East Africa in an unwilling defensive, wore to a tardy close. With the spring, however, reinforcements from the Union rendered possible the long-deferred "Push," and by the middle of the year our troops had left the frontier far behind, and were at last in possession of Tanga and the German railway. It so chanced that the regiment to which Savage was attached found itself in garrison along this line, which runs at the foot of the Usambara mountains. On the top of this range stands the German sanatorium of Wilhelmsthal.

The enemy main forces having hastily evacuated the district, we garrisoned Wilhelmsthal no further than with a Political Officer and a small Indian escort to lend him dignity. Savage, however, in his medical capacity, was presently detailed for a flying visit to the German hospital on the heights, to see whether it was capable of receiving a portion of our all too numer-

[1] Zodiac ring = a flat band of gold with the twelve signs of the Zodiac in relief, made by the natives of the Gold Coast. Supposed to be a relic of the ancient Portuguese occupation.

[2] Marra moja = at once (Swahili).

ous sick and wounded. Thus we find him in an ambulance car negotiating the twenty-mile excellently graded mountain road which connects the sanatorium with a railway station at the foot of the range.

It had been a joyful day when he had seen the last of the horrid bush of the Tsavo valley, equally infested by wild beasts, malaria, and raiding Huns. "The Bibi" had remained as elusive as ever, and while her well-known spoor had continued to be identified among that of the barefoot, splayfoot *askaris*, no glimpse of her in the flesh had been vouchsafed to any of our side who had lived to tell the tale. A still more baffling circumstance was that none of the few German *askaris* captured by us from time to time would own to the presence of a white woman with his own or any other patrol. She enjoyed, therefore, a sort of legendary character (compounded of the attributes of De Wet and Jack the Ripper) among our troops occupying the Tsavo district. This was, it must be confessed, by no means minimised by the officers, as the alertness of patrols and sentries profited exceedingly thereby. Her supposed identity with Frau von König had, through the garrulities of O'Brien, long been common property, and all ranks of the "Bahadurs" were looking eagerly forward to a closer acquaintance with that lady when opportunity should serve.

The dilapidated ambulance coughed and clanked its way slowly up the mountain-side, while plantations of sisal and rubber gave place to plots of bananas, and these again to groves of eucalyptus and wattle. At length appeared a single street of small tin-roofed bungalows, dominated by the usual walled and loop-holed barracks, and crowded by a sour-faced population of women and children. In the nip of the mountain air Savage was deposited at the door of the late Bezirksamt, now metamorphosed into the residence of our "Political."

"Come to see the hospital, have you?" said the latter. "Well, come along and we'll walk up to it now. It's not much of a place, and is pretty full as it is of German wounded, with a few of ours that they caught at different times. There's only one German doctor, but there are lots of nurses, as every Hun female in the district fled here for refuge from the natives. Now we feed them, while their menfolk fight us! The best of the lot is the Matron, the widow of one of their Schutztruppe[1] officers, who got blotted early in the show. She's a rare good sort, and keeps them all in fine order, including the doctor!"

"Any wild Huns hiding in the hills about here?" asked Savage. "We've been having a little trouble farther up the line with some of them who

[1] Schutztruppe—Colonial Protectorate troops.

come down and bomb it at night."

"Not now; a few did come into the town one night to get food, but the lady I was telling you about fairly hunted them. Told them that the town was full of their women and sick, whom they had left to our protection, and whom we would certainly deport to British East if we had any trouble from guerillas. Told them, in fact, that if she saw any more of them, she would lay information with us! Since then they've given the place a wide berth. Well, here we are. Come in, and I'll introduce you to the Matron; she talks some English. Ah, here she is."

A tall raw-boned figure, clad in a peculiarly hideous tartan blouse and shiny black skirt, strode into the verandah. Stockings which had once been white hung in wrinkles above a pair of stalwart ankles, whose feet were encased in large shoes well down at the heel. Her face, though determined, was good-humoured and pleasant.

"Gnädige Frau," began the Political, continuing in English, "let me introduce Doctor Savage of our Army, who has come to see your hospital. Savage, this is the Matron, Frau von König."

Savage felt his jaw drop, and, as in a dream, he followed the Matron round the wards. Half his brain replied mechanically to her remarks, while the remainder shouted, "Frau von König—*the Bibi*, by God!" He stole a glance at his conductress, and decided that she looked as hard as nails and physically quite capable of any amount of bushwhacking at the head of a band of blackguards. Her face, however, seemed hardly in the picture, as he could not but admit that she looked rather a good sort. However, there might well be more than one Frau von König in the Colony: there was no harm in asking, anyhow.

"Is there any other lady of your name in Deutschest-afrika?" he presently ventured, having composed the necessary lie. "I—er—once travelled on one of your boats with a Frau von König, and I think she said she came from these parts. Perhaps she was your son's wife?"

"I know her not," replied the Matron. "Our son, he was not married when you English kill him. And my man, too, you kill at Tanga. Ach, that was the great fight! How we Germans make your Indians run! Our *askaris*, they say the Bwana Ashirini he kill ten, twenty man, before himself he fall! Ach! you would not know; the Bwana Ashirini, that my man's name with our nigger folk."

This was flat enough. Since, then, this Frau von König and "the Bibi Ashirini" were one and the same, if O'Brien's intelligence was correct, the person responsible for the Tsavo atrocities stood before Savage in the flesh. However, there was no point in denouncing her on the spot, and he decided to get away

and have a heart-to-heart talk with the Political. Accordingly he expressed himself satisfied with his inspection of the hospital, and was about to bow his best Continental farewell to the Matron when she extended a large and bony hand, behind the knuckle of whose little finger shone a Zodiac ring! Grabbing the astonished Political by the arm, Savage dragged him outside, and on the way back to the Bezirksamt poured the whole story into his ear.

The Political (who had come from a corner of B.E.A. to which the events of the Tsavo road had not penetrated) scouted the idea of his friend, the Matron, having been the terror of the bush. "Your only evidence seems to be," said he judicially, "first, that some woman unknown went about with the German patrols; secondly, that one O'Brien said she was the Frau von König — apparently on the word of his gun-bearer; thirdly, that the Matron here wears a ring similar to one said to have been looted from Ayling's body. Well, leaving out of the question the extreme unlikelihood of any woman dividing her time between nursing the sick (she has been very good to ours) and murdering the wounded, the Frau can probably produce half the town to prove that she hasn't been out of it since she lost her husband —which, I believe, is the case."

"But what about the ring?" objected Savage.

"Well, it may not be the same, to begin with (I don't suppose Ayling's was the only one in the world), and even if it is, she may have come by it quite innocently."

"That would be *some* coincidence, wouldn't it?" snorted Savage, who began to feel his detective zeal a trifle damped. "What do you make of the whole thing, then?"

"I should say that the gun-bearer was lying, either for the pure fun of the thing or from spite—probably the latter. Do you know his name, or could you describe him?"

"Yes," replied Savage, "his name was Mbaraki, and his face was marked with white patches — leucoderma, you know."

"Very well, then," said the Political, "since you've got to get back at once, you'll have to leave the matter in my hands. It's my job anyhow. I'll find out when and where the Frau got the ring, and whether she knows any native answering to your description of the gun-bearer. If there is any reasonable suspicion against the lady, you can trust me to deal faithfully with her."

"Right," agreed Savage, as he climbed regretfully into his car, to descend again to the heat of the plains; "remember that O'Brien's initials are said to be engraved inside the ring. Good-bye; you might let me have a line some time to say what you make of it."

A couple of months later, being then some hundreds of miles farther south, he received the following letter—

"DEAR SAVAGE,—This is to let you know the results of my investigations in *l'affaire* von K. Yours was a false scent, as I thought from the beginning, and you must look elsewhere for your Jezebel. (1) I have got unimpeachable evidence that Frau von König was in this place at the dates you gave me. (2) She says that ring was given her by her late husband at least ten years ago. I confess I haven't been able to have a look at the inside, as she can't get it off, but I have seen a family group of her and hubby, in which I think I can identify it with a glass. (3) She recognised your description of the gun-bearer, Mbaraki, at once as that of a boy who had deserted from her husband's Company after getting a hiding for insubordination. (I suppose you know that hubby owed his native name of 'Ashirini'[1] to his generosity with the *kiboko*,[2] as he never gave less than twenty of the best!) My solution of the affair is that Mbaraki knew Frau von König's ring, and later on (after he had deserted to Mzima) recognised Ayling's as a fellow to it. Then, when the latter was blotted and his ring taken, apparently by a German woman, the nigger thought he might get a bit of his own back by putting it on his late mistress, to get her into trouble with us later on. They've got the minds of apes, most of them! Hope you are getting even with the Boche down south; we get no news at all up here."

"I wonder!" thought Savage, as he tore up the letter. "Perhaps he's right enough, after all; that Wilhelmsthal woman's foot didn't look as if it could have got into the boot that made the Bibi's spoor. But, then, who *was* 'the Bibi'?"

And there the matter rested for the time.

III.

Two long years dragged by, while the British Forces pressed the remnants of their enemies ever slowly southwards. Base after base had to be opened, each farther down the coast, piers built, and roads hacked inland through the bush, each in turn to be abandoned as the continued southward retreat of the enemy carried him beyond its reach. At length this steady pressure forced him to evacuate his own colony entirely, and take refuge in the adjacent possessions of the Portuguese, which, compared with ravaged "German East," were lands flowing with milk and honey. He now gave up any

[1] Ashirini = the Swahili numeral 20.

[2] Kiboko = a rhinoceros-hide whip, used by the Germans to chasten their black subjects.

pretence at regular warfare, and his forces became merely well-armed and extremely mobile guerilla bands, whose object was to prolong the campaign by avoiding battle. With many a groan we were forced to open yet another sea base, this time at Porto Amelie, in our Allies' territory. Once more we set about driving inland a 200-mile motor road, in the hope of nipping the Huns between our forces advancing therefrom and those operating in the other direction from Lake Nyassa. Again the enemy escaped south at the psychological moment, and again we hurried after him. For some months now a merry game of hide-and-seek ensued in the corner made by the sea-coast and the Zambesi, between our weary columns and the ubiquitous parties of the Huns. Finally, having eaten the country pretty bare, looted most of the Portuguese villages, and completely re-armed and re-equipped himself at the expense of our Allies, the enemy cleverly gave us the slip, and doubled back northwards towards his own colony again. All troops had by now been withdrawn from the Porto Amelie-Nyassaland road, with the exception of a small garrison kept at the sea base, and at the moment when this story reopens, the Hun was reported to have crossed it successfully, and to be still heading north at his best pace.

Savage, by this time one of the very few survivors of the original Indian contingent, found himself in charge of the small hospital which had been left at Porto Amelie, and one evening was sitting at his tent door, gazing across the noble harbour, and wondering if the war would ever end.

"Hullo, Savage!" cried a familiar voice, and O'Brien appeared, more gaunt and ragged than ever, "I heard down at the wharf that you were here," he said, "so I came to look you up and get a drink. We haven't met since the old Tsavo days—let me see, three years ago."

"No," replied Savage, offering whisky and tobacco, "not since the days of 'the Bibi.' I suppose you never got the letter I sent you from Kilwa, saying that we had been after the wrong tiger in Frau von König?"

"Yes, I got it right enough," admitted the other, "but I must have forgotten to answer. I was let in over that finely by that *skellum* Mbaraki. He was a gorgeous liar, but did me well enough. Poor devil, he's dead now — scuppered last week beyond Medo. However, I know now who the real 'Bibi' was." Then he told the following tale.

"You know when the Hun started coming north again, headquarters got the wind up pretty badly, as they had counted on rounding him up down south, and had taken all the troops off this line to hunt him. We had also been buying supplies from the natives all over the district, and had them collected in dumps, wait-

ing transport to the coast. It was plain that we couldn't get them away before the Hun would arrive on his way north and help himself. So, behold me started out in a car to see them burned! You see, my fellows had been used to collect the stuff. There were three of us in the car—the driver, myself, and Mbaraki, with our food and kit. Presently I got to Medo—about a hundred miles inland—and spent the night with the lad in command of a platoon of K.A.R., the only garrison on the whole road. When I was starting next morning he said, 'I hope you won't bump any Hun patrols, as the news is that they're coming north as hard as they can streak, and are due to hit the road any day now. Keep your eyes skinned for lions, too. Since our people all went south a good many have been seen along the track. They got used to looking for our dead mules there.'

"The news about the Huns was pleasant, but I had to go on. All went well till close on dark, when we came to a long bamboo forest, through which the Pioneers had made a track just wide enough for a car. Half-way through this we got a volley from the bush, which blotted the driver. The car charged a tree and came to a standstill. I was shot out, and when I collected my senses a fat Hun was sitting on my chest, while another and a couple of *askaris* were shoving their bayonets into Mbaraki. I counted three white Huns and about ten *askaris;* they were apparently a right flank patrol. They first took off my boots to prevent my doing a guy, and then the fat Hun began to talk German to me. I had enough sense to pretend that I did not understand, and told him so in Swahili, which he knew as well as I did. He asked me where I was going, and I said that I was inspecting the road, and that a battalion in cars was following me from Medo. He roared with laughter, and told me they knew very well we had no troops between them and the border. He seemed a cheery sort of cove, better than the other two. One of them (the swine who had been having a dig at Mbaraki) was a little ape about five feet high, and looked at me very black and bitter. The fat Hun then got trying to pump me about what troops we had ahead of him along the border, and got rather peevish when I wouldn't answer. The little sweep then suggested (in German) that they should twist a cord round my head to make me speak. The fat Hun, however, cursed him good and plenty, and told him they wanted none of his 'schweinerei' there.

"They had a lot of palaver in German then, and I gathered that their main body under Von Lettow was due to hit the road a bit farther west that same evening, and they wanted to send me in so that their boss might talk to me himself. They had found a paper on me giving a list of the dumps. The little sweep, who had retired hurt and had been play-

ing with the car, then spoke up (he seemed to be some sort of Non-Com., as he addressed the fat Hun as 'Herr Hauptmann'—and usually got called 'pig dog' in reply). 'The car is all right,' says he, 'and has plenty of gasoline. I can drive a car. If the Herr Hauptmann pleases, I will drive him and this English swine along the road till we meet headquarters.'

"The fat chap jumped at it, and chuckled a lot over the kindness of the English in lending him a car and making a road for him to drive on. So he told the third Hun to step in the bush with the patrol till he got back. The little ape then took the wheel, and I was made to sit beside him, while the fat Hun and one *askari* sat behind and kept me covered.

"We went along for a bit and I was feeling too fed-up to take much notice of anything. But presently my eye lighted on the hands of the driver as he held the wheel, and I saw a Zodiac ring on one of his fingers. The sight reminded me of the Tsavo road and 'the Bibi,' and I fell to thinking of our bloomer over Frau von König, and wondering how it was we had never got word of who the real woman could have been. Thinking of her spoor made me drop my eyes on the driver's feet, and I saw that they were tiny, like a woman's. The beast was evidently proud of them, as he had on a pair of small, sharp-toed yellow boots, which I suppose he had looted from some Portuguese store down south. Then I suddenly saw it sticking out a mile that 'the Bibi' need never have been a woman at all, but might quite well have been the undersized and bloody-minded little abortion who sat beside me! However, I couldn't see what I was going to do about it at the moment. In fact, the idea made me feel devilish glad that we had the fat Hauptmann with us, or I should probably have been in for a taste of 'frightfulness' myself.

"The car meanwhile had been 'missing' a bit; I suppose the bump had upset her inside. Presently the fat Hun told the driver to get out and tinker her. So we pulled up in a stretch of thick bush, and he opened the bonnet. After a while he said that she was all right again, and having closed the bonnet, began to crank her up. As he stopped over the starting handle, a large lion (which I expect had been stalking us since we stopped) sprang out of the bush on the left of the road, grabbed him by the scruff of the neck, and away with him into the bush on the right. The brute passed within six feet of my face in the dusk. The fat Hun let a yell out of him and grabbed his rifle, standing up in the car for a shot. The *askari* leapt out and pursued after the lion into the bush. 'Now's my chance,' thinks I, and swung round in my seat and caught the fat Hauptmann a wallop in the wind that sent him backwards out of the car on to his skull.

He had to go, as the backs of his knees were up against the side of the box-body. I was after him before he'd fairly struck the ground, and sat on *his* chest for a change—but his neck was broken and he was peaceable enough. So I took his rifle (a Portuguese mauser, it was) and waited in the bush for the *askari* to come back, while I put on my boots again. After a while I heard a couple of shots and him shouting that he had scared off the lion, but that the Bwana was dead. So I called him in Swahili to come back, and then I got him fairly sitting. After that I went to look at the little sweep's body. The lion had bitten him through the base of the skull, and he had died quick and easy—which was a pity, as I was desirous of a bit of a talk with him. So I took off the ring, and there were my own initials within. Look for yourself!" and O'Brien dramatically threw a battered Zodiac ring on to the table among the glasses.

"And how did you get back?" inquired Savage, after he had expressed suitable wonder at the tale.

"Oh, I turned the car round, and drove her back till I reckoned I was within a couple of miles of where we had left the rest of the patrol. Then I left her and crept round them in the bush, and so back on my flat feet to Medo. I wonder if they ever found the bodies, and what they made of it!"

BATOURI.

THE STORY OF OUR SUBMARINES.—VII.

BY KLAXON.

When the Armistice came the enemy was told to notify us of the position and details of his swept channels; this he did, and it was found that there was not much in the report that was news to us. When the U-boats left Germany on their last voyage to our coast in November 1918, they came by the swept channel that runs west from Heligoland to the N. Dogger Bank Lightship; the same channel was used for the voyage of the Armistice Commission in H.M.S. *Hercules* towards Wilhelmshaven in December. It was then found that our charts were, if anything, slightly more up to date than were those of the German pilots. A despatch describing a minelaying submarine's trip will explain why we were so fully abreast of navigational matters inside the Bight.

"'E 45'
(Lieut.-Commander Gaimes).

"April 22nd: Proceeded *viâ* X. 1 channel, Terschelling and South Dogger Bank Lightships.

"April 23rd: Observed noon position 54° 30′ N., 3° 53′ E. 7 P.M.: Picked up first of enemy swept channel buoys and proceeded up channel."

At each buoy she passed, "E 45" fixed position and plotted her run on the chart. At 10 P.M. she dived to pass under one of our mine-groups, and at 11.30 P.M. she rose and proceeded on the surface. At 1 A.M. she went to the bottom in 99 feet till 8.15 P.M., noting in her log that the greatest rise and fall of tide shown on her depth gauge was 4½ feet.

"8.44 P.M.: Observed vessel showing white light. Dived. Continued diving through minefield.

"11 P.M.: Surface. Proceeded to minelaying position."

She then laid her mines and came away by the same route. The laying position was between Heligoland and Ruter Gat, within sight of the German examination steamer and close to the entrance in the boom defence between Heligoland and the shore. If "E 45" had been caught in the act she would have found it awkward, as there was barely enough water there for her to dive, though it was in the main entrance to the enemy local defences.

I have mentioned the case of "E 13," and described her shelling by the enemy when she lay aground on the Island of Saltholm. Of the survivors, two were at once sent to hospital, and the remainder were berthed aboard the Danish ship *Peder Skram*, all being treated with great kindness. The *Peder Skram* took them to Copenhagen and transferred them to the naval barracks. Commander Layton at once began to think of escape, and,

after three weeks in Copenhagen, withdrew his parole—due notice being given on his part and precautions taken on the part of the Danes. He knew that his only chance of escape was to so arrange matters that his absence should be undiscovered till he had time to cross the frontier to Sweden; this was done by the time-honoured method of leaving a dummy figure in his bed. He had to pass six sentries on his way out in addition to the one outside his door, but he had the assistance of his officers in this difficulty. Lieutenant Eddis distracted the door-sentry's attention while his captain had crossed to Lieutenant Garriock's room, and then turned his attention to the two guard officers downstairs. Commander Layton changed in Lieutenant Garriock's room into a suit of "acquired" Danish sailor's clothes, and left by the window down a "hammock lashing." He walked through the kitchen and pantry of the officers' block, went through the pantry window (having already arranged for "distractions" for the outside sentries), and walked off towards the jetty. He passed the old mast crane (that is shown in pictures of the battle of Copenhagen, and which still looks out over waters that have seen wars innumerable), and hurried on to where the dockyard wall joins the sea. There he took to the water and swam some way along the shore till he landed under the lock bridge at the basin entrance. He was now in the town area; he took off his clothes, wrung them out and replaced them (there was 18° of frost), then walked to the Kristiasund-Copenhagen ferry pier. He boarded the ferry and made the passage amidst a crowd of Danish sailors and police, went to a rendezvous with a friend on arrival, changed his clothes, and became a Norwegian merchant-ship mate of Finnish birth and language (Finnish interpreters are generally scarce). He then caught the first train out to Christiania, called at the Legation for a passport, and went straight on to Bergen, changing his personality on the way to that of "George Perkins, U.S.A.—a Marine Overseer." At Bergen he boarded the Norwegian mail-boat for Newcastle, still posing as an American. His histrionic abilities, however, were rather discredited on the journey, as several fellow-passengers doubted that he really came from the States, and one tactlessly stated that he would have put him down as a British naval officer, "if he hadn't been told he was an American." At Newcastle he had considerable difficulty in establishing his identity — the sleuth instinct of a Boy Scout causing him some trouble — but he eventually cleared his character, and reached London on Tuesday, having broken out of prison at 7.30 P.M. the previous Friday. The hue-and-cry started too late to catch him, and, partly perhaps owing to Danish sympathy with this country, and also certainly owing to his personality having

become popular with the Copenhagen people during his parole period, the chase was guided by the Danish newspapers into several wrong directions.

On the 15th April 1915, Submarine "E 15" (Lieut.-Commander T. S. Brodie) made the first attempt to enter the Sea of Marmora. She entered the Dardanelles at 2 A.M., dived at 4, and at 6.45 A.M. she struck the shore under the Turkish guns. The captain ordered all tanks to be blown, and under a terrific fire he tried to get the boat off by going full astern (she had bounced up the beach till her conning-tower and hull were exposed), and the survivors reported that he had just inquired if the hull was badly hit or not when a large shell passed through the conning-tower, killing him instantly. Orders were given to abandon the ship, and Lieutenants Price and Fitzgerald proceeded, while shell after shell struck the boat, to destroy the charts and papers. This boat was later further demolished by a gallant British picket-boat attack. A fortnight later AE2 was sent up, and, as has been told, was lost in the Marmora. The third and fourth boats, "E 11" and "E 14," got through safely. It is interesting to read in a German publication that the German Admiral on the spot stated later, "The English submarines in the Marmora performed magnificently. . . . The English submarine design is excellent." A German officer would not agree with the latter part of the remark, as every nation has a different type of boat, but certainly in the Marmora our submarine officers preferred the E type of boat to anything else.

One thing that this war has shown us is that the Germans have not got a monopoly in the manufacture of first-class optical lenses. In 1914 the German periscope was a lot better than ours; in 1915 we put out contracts for periscopes to new firms in this country; in 1916 our new periscopes equalled those of the enemy; in 1918 our latest periscopes were the best in the world. This advance was accomplished by our firms in face of two handicaps—one, that our periscopes ordered were some seven feet longer than the enemy's; the other, that ours were to be practically vibrationless. The results gained have broken the bubble of reputation previously raised by the Jena glass factories. In the Diesel oil-engine the Germans probably lead us—in steam turbines we lead them. In general submarine design and practice we are a long way ahead, while in certain minor details they give us points to copy. Among a mass of clumsy fittings in their boats (fittings which had long ago been eliminated or simplified with us) one finds small labour-saving "gadgets" installed which we have either not thought of, or have neglected to supply. A typically German piece of thoroughness is to be seen—one specimen on Zeebrugge Mole, the other at Wilhelmshaven. This is a

raised platform carrying a gun on top; the platform works on eccentric bearings which are able, through the use of a separate motor, to roll or pitch the gun to a variable amount while the submarine gunlayer under training endeavours to carry out practice at a target towed past him out at sea. It is also reported that this arrangement is sometimes used to cure submarine sailors of excessive sea-sickness: this is probably true, as an hour's stay on the rocking platform would cure the most hardened case. As our boats did not use the gun much, such a contrivance was not needed; but in any case such shore training, as opposed to practice at sea, is against the usual habit of our Navy. Which method is right—well, there's something to be said for both sides.

Early in the war the U-boats were faster than the E's by quite two knots. Later our patrol boats became two knots faster than the later U's, while, of course, our Fleet submarines were much faster still. In gun-power the U-boats were always better, because they wanted guns more for their work. This implied that our boats were always the faster under water. In speed of diving, *i.e.* in time of getting under, there was practically no difference between the two types. In endurance the types were, ton for ton, the same, though our boats were probably far more comfortable and roomy to live in. In torpedo armament (*i.e.*, in number of tubes) there was no comparison—our boats were always the more heavily armed. In wireless installations we were behindhand in 1914-15, but were ahead in 1918. In general steadiness of diving and control and in under-water handling we were always ahead. In structural strength and capacity to resist the pressures of great depths of water the enemy were probably slightly better. In hydroplane installations the American boats seem to be ahead of both of us. Neither the English nor German boats recorded a success due to the use of hydrophones, and they appear to have been little used by either Submarine Service. Both, however, used the under-water sound-signalling gear (of Fessenden type) with success, and it was found to be a useful adjunct to submarine work. Each Navy was fitting larger torpedoes and warheads in 1918 in view of the fact that the modern surface war-ship was found to be difficult to sink with the usual eighteen-inch weapon.

It will be gathered from the above that we had and still have a lead in design and construction. What is far more important, however, is the lead we have kept in training and quality of the officers and men. The Germans improvised a Submarine Service—we had one already before the war, and we simply expanded it "according to plan," as more boats were needed.

On the outbreak of war, the Submarine Service, as did the surface fleet, added to its per-

sonnel by the use of Royal Naval Reserve officers, and "hostilities only" ratings, the latter being usually men with experience as motor mechanics or workshop engineers. These ratings were employed either in the depot ship workshops or in the engine-rooms of sea-going submarines, and they there justified their presence by the sound and keen work they performed under strange and often dangerous circumstances. The R.N.R. officers were used as watch-keepers and navigators in the boats, and their history in the war is shown in their long lists of decorations and casualties. They were not expected to learn much of the technicalities of submarines — there were other officers aboard who could look after that side of the business—but in many cases they taught themselves far more than had been expected, with the result that they were able to substitute on occasions the regularly trained officers. Their chief duty, however, lay in watch-keeping and navigating: nothing could approach the air of calm detachment with which an R.N.R. would go forward to his bunk to turn in, after he had — half-way through his night-watch on deck—pressed the button of the diving alarm at sight of an enemy patrol boat close aboard, closed the lid, descended with a rush, and reported the cause of the alarm to the captain. By the time the captain had checked the descent and levelled the boat at sixty feet, the R.N.R. lieutenant would be snoring peacefully, the matter being out of his head once he had taken his decision to give the "crash-dive" order. All through the war we carried an R.N.R. officer aboard every sea-going submarine as a "third-hand," and the Service owes a very great deal to the help of these competent and loyal auxiliaries.

The following is written of a combination of two or more true war incidents. It is intended to illustrate what the writer considers to be the true strategic use of patrol submarines.

After 1916 the Submarine Patrol flotillas that watched the exit of the Heligoland Bight were given certain orders, which altered altogether their duties and their *raison d'être*. These were to the effect that no outward-bound ship of the enemy was to be attacked or fired at until a signal had first been made by the sighting submarine, to report such enemy's presence and movement; only homeward-bound ships could be fired at, and if outward-bound ships were seen, the reporting signal was to be made at all costs. This alteration detracted somewhat from the interest of submarine war, but it added largely to the strategic usefulness of our patrol boats. It is of no use to torpedo an enemy ship and thereby lose a chance for the Grand Fleet of cutting off the whole enemy force, and a torpedo fired meant that an hour or more of depth-charg-

ing would follow the shot, and prevent the signal being made before the news of the enemy's position had grown cold.

The submarine was a J boat, and her station was at the western end of the north Dogger Bank-Heligoland line-swept channel. The weather had been rough and wet for the first four days of her patrol, reducing the periscope visibility to a few hundred yards' range across grey and foaming seas. The boat had patrolled at twenty feet depth (which is shallow for a big boat) in order to see anything at all, and because of the steep seas she had kept always beam to them, except for the turns at the end of her ten-mile beat. Each turn had caused her to either break surface or slip down to eighty feet, owing to the quick inclinations given her as the waves met her end-on. The weather cleared suddenly on the fourth night, and next morning she dived at dawn, under a gentle swell that hourly died down to a calm deep blue ocean. The visibility was good — how good her captain had hardly realised until through his high-power periscope he picked up the unmistakable line of brown blurs to the east that meant an approaching enemy squadron at a range of at least ten miles. He turned and dived at half-speed towards them, calling his crew to "action stations" at once. He knew that his orders forbade him to fire, but there was always the chance of his having to use his torpedoes in self-defence,—self-defence, that is, of a legitimate kind, not of the type said to be used in certain districts where only mad elephants are allowed to be killed, but where all the elephants are said to become indubitably mad "after the first shot." As the smoke-blurs grew he eased speed to "dead slow"; the enemy was shown by the rate of change of his bearings to be steering a course which would take him past the J-boat at easy range. The periscope slid along very slowly, only about a foot of its length showing above water; the captain knew that he could see Zeppelins if they were about, but an aeroplane, especially against the sun, is a different proposition, and he did not want to risk being observed before his wireless had done its work. Twenty minutes from sighting the smoke he turned to east to pass parallel to the enemy, and he moved slowly past their line. Looking closely at them with the high-power instrument, and with his periscope top now a bold three feet above the surface, he spoke rapidly and briefly to his third officer, who, note-book in hand, stood at his elbow—

. . . . "Four light cruisers —*Pillau*, *Königsberg*, and two more—line ahead two cables—speed twenty — course west. A destroyer screen on each bow—two a side. Away to starboard of them at five miles are five battle-cruisers—the usual lot with a big screen—

too smoky to count. Cut that down, make a signal of it and get it coded, quick!"

He trained the periscope to eastward again, stared for a minute at the horizon, and then lowered the big instrument down into its well. There was apparently nothing following the two squadrons, and he intended to rise and snap in his wireless signal as soon as they had left him far enough astern—say seven miles—to make it fairly safe for him to do so. After ten minutes he raised his periscope for a *look*, then lowered it and studied his watch for ten minutes more. Another searching sweep of the horizon and—"Stand by for surface—Smack that signal off the moment the aerial's up, Pilot—all ready there? *Surface.* . . ."

The lid swung open as the top of the hull showed, and the captain nipped straight up on to the bridge rail and looked astern towards the haze of brown smoke that marked where the German battle-cruisers were steaming on. After one glance he twisted round to look forward and raised his glasses; lowering them, he gave a general look round and overhead, then beckoned to the messenger (a seaman who stood in the conning-tower with his head just below the lid of the hatch). "Tell the first lieutenant to stop blowing and to come up. . . ."

Twenty seconds later his subordinate was beside him, and he spoke over his shoulder, watching the horizon to the east. "More of 'em coming out—tell the operator to get a hustle on—I'll have to dip in five minutes or they'll see us."

The first lieutenant nodded and turned to jump down the ladder. "Zeppelin to starboard," he said as he vanished; "long way up."

The captain nodded—glanced at the distant airship, and continued his watch on the approaching ships. He had a mild contempt both for a Zeppelin's offensive powers and for her capability of seeing submarine conning-towers at anything but short range. In any case, she was five minutes' flight away at least, and he hoped to be under water again by that time. The enemy squadron appeared at long range to be composed of four more light cruisers with no destroyer screen, and steaming in either quarter-line or line abreast—a formation perhaps adopted as a precaution against submarine attack. After three minutes he began to tap his hand impatiently against the periscope standard; after five, he stepped down and looked anxiously down the conning-tower. The first lieutenant was just coming up the ladder.

"Well?"

"He's burnt out a coil, sir, and it'll take a few minutes; signal's not started yet."

The captain swore shortly; then—"Open up engines——"

The captain watched the first lieutenant's cap vanish below, then turned to watch the approaching enemy. He was

going to cut it rather fine, and the knowledge of the chances he was taking removed his impatience and anxiety. Now that he had made up his mind he felt quite cheerful again. If luck was against him he might get sunk, but the enemy's chance of damaging him in five minutes was small. As he raised his glasses he saw the dull red flash he had been expecting break out from the bows of three of the four cruisers, followed a couple of seconds later by the flame of the fourth. Each cruiser was hidden a moment in a brown ball of smoke, which dissipated before she had passed through it. Through his glasses he saw, high up over their mastheads, a group of little black dots that rose and grew larger; the dots seemed to swerve a little to the left in their flight, as a low-sliced cleek-shot would do, then they slowly descended towards him. When they were some ten degrees above the horizon he lost sight of them, and at the instant the water, four hundred yards short of the J boat, leaped up in fifty-foot spouts to the sound of great cart-whips cracking. A big lump of broken shell passed over with a rythmical whine and stutter—a lump obviously of bad stream-line shape for flying at high speed. The fourth shell pitched a long way short, failed to burst, and came over in a high ricochet, making a noise like a goods train passing. The J boat's helm went over, and she steered for the white mist that still hung where the first shells fell. As she steadied on her course the water under her bows—fifty yards off—turned white, and leaped up in a high solid pillar to the impact of the next salvo. Her helm went hard over, but too late to avoid her bath; she passed through the edge of the waterspout and took the full rain of it over her bridge and conning-tower. The first lieutenant arrived on deck in time to receive a full douche of spray, and to see, a moment later, the fourth ship's erratic contribution fall explosively two hundred yards on the bow and short again. He wiped the water from his face with the sodden sleeve of his sweater and spoke quickly: "Signal's passing now, sir. Shall he wait for an acknowledgment?"

"No, make it twice and stand by to dip. We can stand another salvo or two. . . ."

"Are they only using bow guns?"

"Yes; if they turn and fire all guns it won't be safe. They'll be astern next salvo. . . ."

The first lieutenant had vanished again—the boat had spun round (on the principle of steering for the last general splash, and trusting to the meticulous routine of German gunnery corrections) when, with a vicious crack, the three shells passed over the bridge and burst on the water close aboard beyond the hull. The captain ducked—not so much from surprise, but to avoid what he knew was coming; he looked down the conning-tower and saw the third officer's mouth frame the words, "Signal passed"; he jumped

down, pressing the diving alarm with one hand as he reached up with the other to close the lid. Then number four shell came, falling a few yards short of his saddle tanks, and sending a shower of water and small splinters across the boat: as usually happens, the bad shot had come nearest, though splinters are not of much use against a submarine hull. The lid snapped down and the tail kicked up a little, and a ragged salvo of shell from the broadsides of four light cruisers whitened the sea where the target had been. The ships turned again and started on a wide sweep round the spot before edging back to their leader's course. (No ship unattended by destroyers will risk approaching the place where a submarine has dived.) Up the ladder to the leader's bridge a messenger ran, and stood panting as he held out a signal from the wireless office for the Rear-Admiral to read. The Admiral nodded and looked astern — "No doubt of its origin," he said, frowning. "They call that their Submarine Emergency Reporting Code. We shall alter course——"

The fight between the submarine and its enemies has been waged throughout the war with great intensity of feeling. The submarine weapon aroused hatred aboard surface ships just because it made them feel helpless (I am not referring to acts outside the pale of International or Human laws). The submarine felt—well, not hatred, but fear. There is a ruthlessness of action which is apparently born of cruelty, but which is really due to instincts of self-preservation alone. When U 18 torpedoed and sank "E 22," she rose, in spite of the danger of attack by other E-boats near, and picked up the survivors; she could, in view of the fact that her enemies were three miles off, risk doing this. Our own boats have on practically every occasion picked up the survivors of the U-boats they have sunk, —this because, having command of the sea, we could be sure in local waters of nothing hostile interfering. When Lieutenant D'Oyley-Hughes, however, sank U 153 off Cape St Vincent, and rose to pick up the men in the water, he saw another U-boat dive at him from close quarters, which forced him to go under also. In consequence the survivors were drowned—a contingency which might have been avoided if the two belligerent submarines diving round the spot could have trusted each other sufficiently to rise with a white flag flying. As things were, neither would risk being torpedoed on the surface. This spirit was induced early in the war (the incidents which started the feeling need not be quoted), and it is regretted that there was throughout no International arrangement by which a submarine could "go out of play" for a while with a white flag hoisted. The fact that the enemy's War-Book directly permits a

breach of rules, if such breach is of vital necessity, is a great bar to the drawing up of humane and decent laws on the subject; while, of course, a breach of the rules by an angry surface vessel (no unlikely thing to occur) would at once abrogate all the rules in the minds of submarine people. There is no doubt that a new weapon calls for new laws to control and guide its use. The enemy boats were used illegally because the enemy Government ordered such use. In certain cases the U-boat captains exceeded their instructions and acted yet more illegally. In such cases it rests with the enemy Government to repudiate or approve their subordinates' actions. In our submarine service we had no orders to be "frightful," and therefore we were humane and acted legally; if we had had such orders as the enemy gave, we would have carried them out, and, from a technical point of view, carried them out much better. But we would have had no instances of personal excess in such acts, just because that sort of thing would not have appealed to our officers. I should mention that the cases of "excess" among U-boat captains were confined to a few, in comparison with the numbers employed, and certain of them met their deaths before they could return to tell of their deeds.

If submarines are allowed to navies of the future, they must have a code of rules to work by. The code should be drawn up by people who know their subject, and who are also influenced in their ideas by the laws of chivalry and not by the ideas of the German War-Book. Apart from questions of right or wrong, unnecessary killing in war does not pay. Anybody can think of instances of this, but to suggest a case: if a U-boat had been sunk by our patrol vessels while she was in the act of picking up survivors from a torpedoed ship, well, the Germans would have lost a U-boat, but would have gained a splendid piece of propaganda. The patrol vessels could not be blamed, but the U-boat Service would have had a good grievance for the rest of the War. It is not only what you do in war that counts—the way you do it has a lot of influence also on the ultimate result. It is true that war is the negation of ethics, and that expediency is the ruling motive in all warlike acts, but it is a mistake to think, as the enemy did, that ruthlessness pays — decency may very often pay better. In war, a nation must take the blame for the acts of its militant servants; it sometimes pays to disavow such acts, and to sacrifice a subordinate, but in the main all blame must fall on the Government giving the orders. The essence of a military or naval force is discipline, and owing to that discipline all responsibility must in the end be shouldered by the Governments, except in the cases where individual officers have exceeded their orders or interpreted them to the dissatisfaction of their seniors. In our Submarine Service no

boat left harbour without definite written orders, and the exact spirit in which her duty was to be carried out was fully understood. If any officer at any time had departed from his orders to the extent of "frightfulness," he would have found himself at once in a serious position: as nobody ever tried the experiment, I cannot quote any cases.

I cannot do better, in speaking of the crews of our boats, than to quote from a despatch of Commodore Keyes (as he was then), written in 1914:—

"When a submarine is submerged, her captain alone is able to see what is taking place; the success of the enterprise and the safety of the vessel depend on his skill and nerve, and the prompt, precise execution of his orders by the officers and men under his command. Our submarines have been pioneers in waters which might well have been mined. They have been subjected to skilful and well-thought-out anti-submarine tactics by a highly-trained and determined enemy, attacked by gun-fire and torpedo, driven to lie on the bottom at a great depth to preserve battery-power, hunted for hours at a time by hostile torpedo craft. . . .

"Sudden alterations of course and depth, the sound of propellers overhead, and the concussion of bursting shells, give an indication to the crew of the risks to which they are being exposed; and it speaks well for the morale of these young officers and men, and their gallant faith in their captains, that they have invariably carried out their duties quietly, keenly, and confidently under conditions which might well have tried the most hardened veteran.

"The Commanding Officers of the submarines are of the opinion that it is impossible to single out individuals when all performed their duties so admirably, and in this I concur. . . ."

That description of the submarine sailor held good throughout the war, as in 1914.

There is another despatch of 1914, which gives a clear picture of Heligoland patrol work in the winter months:—

"During the past week these submarines have experienced very heavy westerly gales . . . a short steep sea which made it impossible to open the conning-tower hatch, vision limited to that obtained through the periscopes (*i.e.*, only a cable or two between the seas that continually broke over them). The submarines were thus an easy prey to any surface vessel falling in with them, and it was therefore necessary to keep submerged; also, to make an offing, as there were no means of obtaining the position except by sinking to the bottom and obtaining soundings. There was no rest on the bottom even at a depth of 22 fathoms, as the submarines were rolling and bumping there in spite of considerable negative buoyancy, and it was therefore necessary to keep under way at a depth clear of the keels of possible ships. At this depth motion was considerable, and pumping (*i.e.*, vertical motion) was 20 to 30 feet. When battery-power became low, it was necessary to come to the surface, as lying on the bottom was dangerous. On the surface, it was necessary to keep a ventilator open to run the engines, in order to keep head to sea; through this ventilator much water was shipped. . . . No good purpose can be served in maintaining the close blockade of the Bight in such weather. Even if the enemy emerged, which is unlikely, it would be almost impossible to bring off a successful attack."

I have in this history only quoted typical despatches and incidents in the work of our submarines. It would take many books to quote them all. I feel that I have dealt with a great story in an inadequate way, but only a

great writer could deal with it faithfully. Trying to sum up impressions of four years of war, I find that two memories stand out and hide the rest: one is of the face of a hydroplane man as he sat leaning forward to watch his gauge — his whole attention fixed on the movement of the needle and on his own job—oblivious of the rushing sound of turbine-driven propellers as German destroyers passed overhead; the other is of the salvage of one of our boats three weeks after she sank, when we found each officer and man at his station as they had died after every detail of their drill had been carried out, and of the feeling of respect—even, perhaps, of envy of men who had passed such a test without a failure —with which one raised and carried them away. One wanted to be able to tell them so, but I think they did know, at any rate before they died, that their fellow-craftsmen would approve, as the men of Major Wilson's patrol must have known at the Shangani river in '93, that those who came to bury them would recognise that they had died well.

The Submarine Service was good before the war. The many who have died in the boats since have given it a tradition that will ensure its standard being always maintained: such men have given the survivors a high code to live up to. I will conclude by quoting a message from the Commodore of Submarines, which was promulgated to all the boats after the Armistice:—

"12*th November* 1918.

"Now that a General Armistice is in force, I wish to lose no time in tendering my personal tribute to the officers and men of the Submarine Service.

"Having had a good deal to do with this Service in its early stages, it has been a great honour and a great pleasure to command it in war, and it must be a source of great pride and satisfaction to you, as it is to me, that our peace organisation and training have withstood the supreme test, and that you have so splendidly carried out the many and varied services demanded of you.

"Submarines were the first at sea on the outbreak of war, they have been continuously in action while it lasted, they will be the last to return to harbour.

"You have, in addition to the invaluable outpost, patrol, mine-laying, fleet duties, and other services, the sinking of 54 enemy warships and 274 other vessels to your credit, and you have done more to counter the enemy's illegal war upon commerce than any other single means; at the same time you have been called upon to man new and intricate types of submarines, demanding the highest standard of knowledge and efficiency. Your steadiness and grit, whilst the toll of your gallant fellows was heavy, has been beyond

all praise, and will form glorious pages in naval history when this comes to be written.

"You have established a magnificent record of strenuous and gallant service, of clean fighting and devotion to duty that must always be a source of keen satisfaction to you for the rest of your lives, as it will be a great tradition to hand down to those who follow you.

"It is inevitable, from the nature of submarines, that your senior officers cannot lead you into action as they would wish. It has been my duty to try and get you the best material, to maintain fairness and equity on the sole ground of personal efficiency, and to maintain your reputation for efficiency and modesty.

"In this I have been so ably and loyally assisted by all without distinction, that I can never sufficiently express my gratitude and admiration for you. The result was certain. We leave the war with a record as proud as any that war has ever produced.

"S. S. HALL,
"Commodore (S.)."

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE DISCREDIT OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—ITS CAUSES—THE CORRUPTION OF DEMOCRACY—THE FALSEHOOD OF RHETORIC—KENELM DIGBY, IDEALIST—'THE BROAD STONE OF HONOUR'—SHALL WE TRY THE KAISER?—REMEMBER ST HELENA!

ONE of the strangest among the indirect consequences of the war is the complete discredit into which the House of Commons has fallen. Even had the war not come upon us, it would have been precipitated into the same pit. The interested excesses of Radicalism, which ever since 1906 have been involving the country in ruin, would doubtless have done their work had the peace of Europe never been broken. But the war has been a fearless revealer of the truth; it has shown us all our weak spots. Moreover, we have won it in spite of the politicians, and it is natural that we should all be asking the question: what qualities has the House of Commons displayed of late except fear? To find a convincing answer is not easy, nor is it enough to point to the sad fate which inevitably overtakes democracies of every kind.

For many years we have boasted of the Mother of Parliaments, who once upon a time was universally respected. Not many years since she seemed to all the world a comely matron, who could dictate virtuously and wisely to the nations less happily cared for. To-day nobody does her reverence. In the eyes of most she is no better than a slatternly drab, who is ready to accept a comfortable maintenance, and in the meantime will thank you for a cab fare. The contempt, which is universal, is not cherished by all classes for the same cause. Messrs Smillie and Macdonald, for instance, and the other anarchists, who, believing in what they call "direct action," would hate any body of men which refused them the moon when they ask for it, object to the House of Commons because they believe that it might, at a pinch, oppose their predatory designs. They regard all governments as blackmailers regard a victim who has refused to pay up, and their hostility has nothing whatever to do with the virtues and vices of the present House. Nor, indeed, should their displeasure intimidate our governors or perplex their critics. The apostles of "direct action," if they were capable of thought, would recognise the absurdity of their position. They have expressed a fervent belief in the "divine" principles of democracy; they have won the uni-

versal suffrage for which they clamoured; they could make themselves the masters of the country whenever they choose, by the mere weight of their votes, if they won the respect of their fellows; and they have been handsomely beaten at the polls. Wherefore they shout aloud for a general strike, and do not understand that in the very act of shouting they prove themselves traitors to the divine principle. There is much else which they do not understand, and they would not matter if the House of Commons, which it is their sole policy to blackmail, were bold enough to stand up to them.

The wiser classes of the community think ill of the House of Commons for very different reasons. They have perforce accepted the rules of the democratic game, and, not being anarchists, are ready to abide by them, as well as they can. Until they can rid themselves lawfully of a pernicious system they are willing to make the best of it. But one thing they find impossible: to respect the House of Commons. They may regard the candidate who solicits their vote as an honourable man. They have an uneasy feeling, founded upon the bitter experience of the past, that no sooner does that candidate join what was once called in irony the best club in London, than he will become part and parcel of a vast intrigue. He will no longer speak with his own voice nor think with his own mind. He will be unable to avoid the stumbling-block of corruption that lies in his path. Such is the general opinion, and it is impossible to say that the opinion is ill-founded. The public service and corruption have, indeed, become convertible terms, and it is worth while to attempt to discover what events in the last twelve years have cast a slur upon what was once an honourable profession.

In the first place, then, the Marconi affair, insidious and universal, like the Affaire Dreyfus, has left upon our political life an indelible stain. The main facts are already half forgotten. Mr Godfrey Isaacs, the manager of a company with which the Government had a contract, brought back from America a large parcel of shares in a closely related company. Sir Rufus Isaacs, as he was then, purchased 10,000 shares, and passed over 1000 to Mr George as an "investment." In the House of Commons Sir Rufus Isaacs declared that neither he nor any of his colleagues had bought any Marconi shares, meaning, by a mental reservation, shares in the English Marconi Company. Of those who gambled in the shares of a company, with a branch of which the Government had a contract, one is now Prime Minister, another is Lord Chief Justice. Had a plain and full confession been made by the offenders a sponge might have been drawn over the offence. But no confession was made until it was wrung out

of them by cross-examination. And even then there was no atonement, no repentance. The parliamentary committee appointed to inquire into the case was a farce, as it was meant to be, and while it "whitewashed" Mr George and Sir Rufus Isaacs, it left an indelible mark upon the House of Commons. Worse still, the truth of the matter is still unknown, and it is not surprising that the worst is still believed by many simple folk. Is it any wonder that when a Chancellor of the Exchequer, who finds it profitable to condemn in others the "unearned increment," was found gambling for a "rise" on the Stock Exchange, aided by "inside" information, the sincerity of politics received a blow from which it has never recovered?

The besetting sin of all democracies is corruption, and if our democracy, now on its trial, is not engulfed with all its predecessors, then should we have set our faces immovably severe against the mere hint of suspicion. We lost our chance, and we shall never be able to pay for our folly in full. And there is another kind of corruption, yet more dangerous, which our politicians have not been able to avoid, and that is the corruption of opportunism. The only security we can have that the members of our Government are doing their duty is a clear assurance that they will support only such measures as they approve. They should be firmly based upon the rock of principle. If they advocate this or that course of action, we should have a right to believe that they advocate it because they hold it just. The peculiar crime of the politician—and every craft has its peculiar crime—is to sacrifice a well-grounded opinion for the sake of office, to be untrue to oneself for the mere sake of gain and position. In better days than these we had a certain guarantee that a Minister was expressing what he thought when he rose to speak, because if he differed from his colleagues in the Cabinet he resigned instantly. The habit of resignation is lost to-day. A Cabinet Minister regards himself as an advocate of the measure believed to be expedient by his colleagues, and if he be asked to make what he considers the worse cause to appear the better, that is their fault, not his. He helps them to pass their measure—they in their turn reward him by securing his salary.

The Parliament of 1906 was not very old when the Government thought it useful to pass the Trade Disputes Act, "the Magna Charta of Syndicalism and Anarchy," as Professor Hearnshaw rightly calls it—an Act which put the Trade Unions above and beyond the laws, and which has caused since its passage a vast deal of suffering and injustice. But it is not our purpose here to say a word further in condemnation of an infamous measure, the repeal of which the Trade Unionists

would demand themselves if they sought their own ultimate advantage. We desire to point out that it was accepted and passed by men who had previously denounced it. Mr Asquith and Lord Haldane, both members of the Cabinet, had, we believe, expressed their stern displeasure at a Bill which Lord Halsbury, speaking moderately, described as "the most outrageous Bill ever attempted to be put on the Statute Book." The Bill was put on the Statute Book, and it did the country a far greater injury than the open legalisation of anarchy: it proved that Cabinet Ministers could be found to support measures which they knew in their hearts and had pronounced with their tongues to be wicked and infamous.

And so the House of Commons fell, as it deserved to fall, into disrepute. So opportunism won an easy victory over honour and sincerity. The passing of the Trade Disputes Bill enforced the new and wicked principle that expedience was a better guide than justice. Whatever a compact majority demands must be surrendered by those supine Ministers who believe that the King's Government cannot be carried on without them, and who know that the loss of £5000 would be a serious inconvenience. From the acceptance of that principle all the woes of Great Britain have proceeded. It made it clear that henceforth government was an affair not of wisdom but of blackmail. The men who had once extracted a privilege of wickedness did not stay their hand. They had obtained what they wanted by putting a pistol to the Government's head, and having won one boon they demanded another, like the hardened brethren of the Black Hand. Where, then, will the noxious practice cease? On the one side are marauders, who care for none but themselves, and who feel so little gratitude for what is given that they laugh at the Ministers who surrender to them as the most craven set the world has ever seen. On the other side is a Government composed of opportunists, who care not for the consequences of their acts, so long as they remain in power, and who cheerfully repeat, parrotwise, "after us the deluge." Between them the poor country is ground to pieces. The wise and the good have no chance of support, nor even of a hearing, because they are not numerous, and it is not surprising that politicians and politics have fallen into disrepute.

And there is another reason why sensible men look upon the House of Commons with a sad contempt. Those who lead it speak always in a loud voice, which they hope will reach the mob without. And as their voices are loud, so is their statement always overcharged. Wherever they speak, at Westminster or the hustings, they aim at a blatant effect, nor do they hamper themselves with any strict

code of truth. Of the false rhetoric, which is the bane of our politics, examples may be found in almost any speech made by any one of our demagogues during the last twelve years. We will content ourselves with one shining specimen. It is within the memory of all that, in 1909, Mr George twisted what should have been a financial speech into as violent a piece of demagogic propaganda as ever we have known. His budget, which should have been the mere means of meeting the country's expenditure, was ingeniously designed to promote class hatred and to destroy the House of Lords. It met with complete success—for the moment. And Mr George published his own account of it under the absurd title, "The People's Budget." Whose budget should it be in a democratic state if it were not the people's? And in a peculiarly riotous preface he made this statement: "There are at least 200,000 aged toilers, who stand at the gates wistfully awaiting the turn of the key, with nothing between them now and their redemption but the greed of the Lords." Now, either Mr George believed that these sentimental words were true, or knowing them to be false, as they were, he believed them useful to himself. In either case, he was proved unfit to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. If he believed them, he was too stupid; if he used them without belief, he was too dishonest to hold office in a respectable Government. That the statement and others like it were useful is beyond question. Noisily elaborated by Messrs George and Churchill on a hundred platforms, they brought thousands of Radical votes to the ballot-boxes.

So long, then, as the sinister practices—popular since 1906—prevail, the House of Commons cannot recapture the respect in which it once was held. We have little hope of converting from their fatal opportunism the members of the old gang who make up the Coalition. The easy habit of picking up votes in exchange for reckless statements is so closely ingrained in them that they cannot shake it off. If we could follow a counsel of perfection, we would decree that all those in the House of Commons who have ever held office are henceforth ineligible. With new men and better morals we might hope for such a reform as would lift the Government of the future from the mire in which it is hopelessly encumbered. But we cannot follow a counsel of perfection, and the utmost that we can do is to point the way to a peaceful revolution. This revolution might be brought about peacefully if only politicians would adopt in public the code of morals which serves them in private. A man who wilfully deceives another in the common traffic of life for his own profit is debarred the society of

his fellows. And why should demagogues be absolved from the decencies of life merely because they sit in the Commons or stand upon the hustings? Perhaps the truth is too much to expect of those who have not forgotten what the falsehood of Chinese Labour did for them. But until public opinion decrees that a lie is a lie, whether it be spoken on the platform or at home, we cannot hope that politicians will be well thought of; and their one chance of recovering a fragment of the popular esteem is rigidly to deny themselves the practice of their favourite and most profitable vice.

And when they have purged themselves of falsehood, let them purge themselves also of corruption. The scandal of the party funds still casts a deep shadow upon the public life of England. The charge that money has been exchanged for honours and improperly used has never been boldly or honestly met. No attempt has been made to remove reasonable suspicions: the names of subscribers, who for all we know may be alien enemies, have been sternly withheld. We see no cause why there should be party funds at all. We see many causes, if these funds exist, why they should be audited publicly. Especially we demand a better assurance than we have ever received that titles are not exchanged for cheques. Once upon a time a sound practice prevailed. When Lord Melbourne was Prime Minister, an eminent collector offered his gallery to the nation, hinting at the restoration of an ancient baronetcy in his family. Lord Melbourne curtly replied that he did not "barter the honours of the Crown," and the collection, very properly, went elsewhere. Our public morality has declined since Melbourne's time, and we have little confidence that there is any honour which might not at a pinch be brought into the market-place. But so long as titles and places in the Government are given to Ministerial favourites of foreign blood, the general confidence cannot be restored, and until we aim at a higher mark it will be something of a reproach to be elected to the House of Commons.

To turn from the squalor of those who confuse the service of the country with their own advancement to the idealism of Kenelm Digby is like getting out of a musty dungeon into the freedom of the open air. So little did Digby care for the popular esteem that he was known to few in his own day, and is already fading into oblivion. Yet he is worth remembering as the plain antithesis of those who to-day are hunting successfully for profit or success, and we welcome Mr Bernard Holland's Memoir of Kenelm Digby (London: Longmans & Co.) as a loyal attempt to sketch a writer who, though he lived retired from the world,

preached the simple doctrine of chivalry with so fine an effect that he influenced not only the Oxford Movement but the movement known as Young England, and through that influenced Benjamin Disraeli himself.

Born in 1797, Kenelm Digby entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in the year of Waterloo. Happily immune from the drudgery of earning his own living, he was able to linger in the neighbourhood of the University, which he loved, for many years, and to pursue those studies in chivalry which he turned to excellent use in 'The Broad Stone of Honour,' the book by which he is still remembered by a few. To his high mind and brave heart chivalry was never dead, and if he found in his own age little enough to attract him, he could still live securely in the past and be happy. Such a business as we call politics was always alien to him, and it says not a little for his book that it was eagerly read by the romantic politicians of the forties, and that it helped them not a little to formulate their creed. Indeed, no history of the Romantic Movement, which was all of a piece throughout Europe, is complete without a reference to Kenelm Digby, who was on a small scale an English Chateaubriand, who preached his gospel without insistence, and who, writing for himself and a few friends, was surprised to find that his quiet voice carried so far as to reach the broadening circles of politics.

It is in vain that we search the memoirs of his time for light upon his life and character. Something he has told us of himself, for he had a natural love of autobiography; and beyond that we must content ourselves with one famous reference in Fitzgerald's 'Euphranor.' "And then Euphranor ask'd me, 'Did I not remember Digby himself at College—perhaps knew him?' 'Not *that*,' I answered, 'but remembered him very well. A grand, swarthy fellow, who might have stepped out of the canvas of some knightly portrait in his father's house — perhaps the living image of one sleeping under some cross-legg'd effigies in the church.'" And to make the picture clearer, Fitzgerald in the same dialogue calls Tennyson, "a man at all points, Euphranor—like your Digby—of grand proportion and figure, becoming his ancient and honourable race." There we have a clue as to how Digby struck a contemporary. We know from himself that he claimed to be the "founder of boating on the Cam," and we agree with Mr Bernard Holland that a monument should be erected to his memory on the banks of that slow and wandering river.

"Once he and his crew," says Mr Holland, "rowed their eight-oar all the way down the Cam and the Ouse to the sea, crossed the Wash, and went up the river through the marsh levels to Boston. . . .

In crossing the Wash they saw seals lying on banks of sand," where they are still lying to this day. Fortunate in his associations at Trinity, he was the friend of Whewell and Sedgwick, of Julius Hare and Praed, and it is vastly to the credit of them all that they looked not askance upon him when he joined the Roman Catholic Church. Truly Digby's friendship for Whewell will seem strange to those superficial critics who regard the great Master of Trinity as a kind of monster, fit only to inspire fear. "I had reason to regard Whewell," wrote Digby to Aubrey de Vere after Whewell's death, "as one of the most generous, open-hearted, disinterested, and noble-minded men that I ever knew. I remember circumstances that called for the exercise of each of these rare qualities, when they were met in a way that would now seem incredible, so fast does the world seem moving from all ancient standards of goodness and moral grandeur." And the world has moved still faster since Whewell's death.

There was always something of Don Quixote in Digby, sane though he was. He showed his affinity with the hero of Cervantes in his choice of studies, which were, says Mr Holland, "of books of chivalry and medieval history, towards which his first bent had been given by the heroic poems of Walter Scott," through whom he was closely knit to the Romantic Movement. Nor did he shirk the consequences of his study. "As an undergraduate," we are told, "he resolved to be a knight, and getting into King's College Chapel at nightfall, kept his vigil there till dawn. He had a design to keep a night's vigil in Ely Cathedral also. He had a friend of like humour, George Darby, and at Marklye in Sussex they held a solemn tournament, with ponies for steeds and hop-poles for spears. In imitation of the bold Deloraine they rode one night to Hurstmonceaux Castle, and touched its walls with their lances. One day, as Kenelm was riding by himself, he had a knightly adventure. A pretty damsel of seventeen came down a side lane, and said that she had been molested by a felon. Would he let her walk by the side of his horse, and protect her, into Hastings?" Such as he was in his youth, he remained unto the end, a loyal champion of chivalry and romance, and if politics were anything better than an eager striving to get on, we could imagine no better preparation for the duty of serving one's country than a study of 'The Broad Stone of Honour.' And we would commend to all those willing to help their native land rather than themselves an early edition of that romantic piece of prose, an edition still free from the taint of bigotry. It is full of knightly lore and classical allusions, for Digby held that Sir Hector, Sir Ajax, and Alexander possessed the same chi-

valrous qualities as King Arthur's knights. So he set out to teach divers gentlemen, "as well as of the realm of England, as of those famous Kingdoms of Ireland and Scotland," as servants of a British monarch, how "to emulate the virtue of their famous ancestors, and as Christian gentlemen, to whom Europe is a common country, to follow the example of those worthies of Christendom, who are the patrons of the Church, the defenders of the poor, and the glory of their times." Gladly he quotes Joseph de Maistre and "the sublime Taylor," and those great men who with eloquence and fervour preached the gospel of virtue. Not for him that "restless craving for the wonders of the day," which, says Mr Coleridge, "in conjunction with the appetite for publicity, is spreading like an efflorescence on the surface of our national character."

It was upon chivalry, then, that he founded his doctrine. "In chivalry," said he, "as in childhood, there is a vital principle, 'from everyday forms educing the unknown and the uncommon. In that little Goshen there will be light, when the grown world flounders about in the darkness of sense and materiality,' and while chivalry and childhood shall be left, imagination and piety shall not have spread their holy wings totally to fly the earth." Thus, quoting Lamb, then an obscure writer like himself, he mingles the new with the old when it serves his purpose. Thus he preached constantly to the text that youth, guided by good examples, "may learn that the object of its pride and happiness is to be obtained by virtue." Moreover, he believed that the world would be saved by the highest and the lowest combined; and it was by this belief that he influenced the practising politicians of a slightly later age, the champions of the Tory Democracy. "In the intellectual as well as in the political world," he wrote, "there is a certain harmony and union between the highest and lowest classes, founded upon principles and feelings which the intermediate ranks are either unable or unwilling to comprehend; but being, as it were, taught by nature to the unsophisticated heart of man, are generally popular, and being, at the same time, sanctioned by religion and true philosophy, and connected, in some degree, with eminent qualities of soul, are therefore held and experienced, in all ages of the world, by men who are distinguished from their contemporaries by extraordinary genius and virtue." Strong in this faith, he would discard all the opportunists and agitators, who for their own ends would separate the highest from the lowest, and make of politics a stumbling-block of offence. What, indeed, has Kenelm Digby to make or to mar in this present world of greed and confusion? And yet our safety

lies only in discarding the dull and selfish present, and in seeking salvation in the great examples furnished by the past. Alas! 'The Broad Stone of Honour' is not likely to win a belated popularity. To be intelligible to-day it would need to be rewritten in a common style. Nevertheless we are grateful to Mr Bernard Holland for having reminded us of a forgotten worthy, and we shall hope against hope that some day a patriotic publisher will give us a comely reprint of a noble and inaccessible book.

There is nothing chivalrous in the character or the bearing of him who once was the German Emperor. He wore the trappings of state; he had modelled his speech upon a half-understood tradition of the past. But the thought of chivalry was far from him. He was incapable of appreciating the austere thought and the lofty prose of Kenelm Digby, and as we look back upon his inglorious career we recognise in him all the disfiguring marks of the *parvenu*. He seemed to be surprised that he stood where he did, at the head of a vast nation, and he tried to conceal his surprise by an exaggeration of gesture, by the use of a rhetorical utterance. Moreover, he cherished the belief—a belief encouraged by his hypnotised people—that whatever he did or said was magnificent merely because he did or said it. And so, before the war, he had won the reputation of a royal amateur, to whom all things were possible. He improved, or thought that he improved, upon the example set by Frederick the Great. His predecessor added merely the gift of poetry to his other gifts of generalship and sovereignity. William II. was, as well as Emperor, an architect, by pretence, a playwright, a preacher, a sculptor, and many things besides. His fame, put on with his crown, has been rudely stripped from him, and he is to-day, as he emulates the late Mr Gladstone in cutting down trees, the most heavily punished man in Europe. Think what it must mean to him to be deprived of the flattery of Messrs Sven Hedin and Houston Chamberlain! Why, then, should we not leave him alone to the misery of his own reflections? In the Hell depicted by Rabelais, Alexander the Great got a poor living by mending and patching clouts upon old breeches. William II. is already in his Inferno, and, having once dreamed of the mastery of the world, contents himself with the humble trade of sawing wood.

And at that trade, had we been wise, we should have left him. But we are already paying the penalty for a peace devised by "plain men," ignorant alike of life and history. So William of Hohenzollern is to be brought to trial in London, before a court which must be invented for the purpose. We have blundered at every step. Had it been necessary

to try the Kaiser, he should have been summoned before a court-martial and dealt with summarily upon the spot. Imagine now what is in store for us! A state trial, stripped at the outset of dignity and justice. As no court of law will be large enough for so august a ceremony, the play will doubtless be performed at Olympia before an eager idle mob of sight-seers. On the bench, we suppose, there will preside that excellent Briton, the Earl of Reading, Lord Chief Justice of England. The prosecution will be led by Sir Gordon Hewart, the Attorney-General, supported by a large mob of King's Councillors and members of the Junior Bar. It will be the heyday of the lawyers, and if England and the world emerge without ridicule, they will be fortunate indeed.

That any good can come of the comedy we do not believe. It will create no useful precedent. The trial of a monarch has never failed to recoil upon those who undertook it. It mattered not whether Mary Queen of Scots were innocent or guilty, her death on the scaffold has left a slur upon the fame of Elizabeth, and it showed the way to the judicial murder of her grandson. For these crimes, or blunders, we still bear the punishment, which justly falls upon us and upon us alone. After all, they were affairs of domestic policy, and if the royal victims were tried at all, they were tried perforce upon English soil. But there is no reason why London should be chosen for the dubious honour of trying the Kaiser. He is not our enemy alone; he has been the enemy of the world, and it is not our business to be the jailers of Europe. Even if we succeed, after the jugglery of the law courts, in getting a verdict against him, our unwelcome duty will be but half done. As the trial is in our hands, so will punishment be also, and we must remain his watch-dogs until the common lot of all men, be they kings or chimney-sweeps, overtakes him.

It is not a pleasant prospect, this, of bearing a weight of odium which, if it is to be borne at all, should be decently distributed. Nor is it as though we had not had a warning. History is made by gossip, and though the falsehoods of history may be corrected by experts, the correction never reaches the prejudiced minds of the people. For instance, after Waterloo, Napoleon threw himself upon the mercy of the English, for the very good reason that he believed in their sense of justice. In concert with our Allies we sent him to St Helena, and we have suffered in esteem ever since. The work was none of our seeking, and we performed the ungrateful task with scrupulous care and moderation. What has been our reward? The honest soldier, Hudson Lowe, whom we sent as jailer to Napoleon, guarded his prisoner with the energy imposed upon him, and without any

undue severity. And Napoleon saw to it that he should lose the world's respect for ever. The falsehoods told by Napoleon and others concerning Hudson Lowe have been conclusively disproved. It makes no matter. Lowe is still a bogey to frighten French children withal, and the English nation lives in the same atmosphere of obloquy which enwraps him. Moreover, it was at St Helena that Napoleon invented the legend which still clings about his name. He talked and he wrote to admirable purpose, and as he was a man of cunning as well as a man of genius, he took a peculiar pleasure in deceiving posterity. He also devised that *politique de Longwood*, which made Hudson Lowe's life a burden to him and his name a byword among all peoples.

That is what we owe to our over-placed zeal a hundred years ago. If we consent to be the Kaiser's jailers, our ignominy will be increased. Not that the Kaiser would ever give us so much trouble as did Napoleon. He lacks the great Emperor's wit and imagination. Poor man! he is obliged to ask pomp, and German pomp, to do the work of brains, and any legend of his fashioning would be both meagre and incredible. Nevertheless, we want not the odious responsibility. Above all, we should refuse to bind about the Hohenzollerns' brows the crown of martyrdom. For that he would be worshipped as a martyr by his own countrymen there is no doubt. The first announcement of his trial persuaded hundreds of German men and German women to offer themselves, vicariously, to be tried. His brother, his sons, his statesmen, and his generals, are all ready to put upon their backs the burden of his crimes. And though we ask, and would accept, no scapegoat, it is obvious that, as soon as the Kaiser is brought to trial, he will appear in the eyes of all his countrymen as a poor persecuted hero, willingly sacrificed for the sins of his subjects. What can be done to avoid what will be a tragi-comedy, if it do not fade into a stupid farce, we do not know. It stands in black and white in the Treaty of Peace that the Kaiser shall be tried for his high misdemeanours, and we are told that the article cannot be expunged. Yet even if it be too late to escape from the consequences of our folly and our ignorance, we can still protest against the Kaiser's proposed visit to London, and can refuse to undertake an onerous duty which does not belong exclusively to us. If Mr George must have his drama, let it be played out at Geneva. We have heard a vast deal about the wisdom and virtue of the League of Nations, and about the high salaries which its happy officials are to receive as a reward for their sad exile. Let them, then, earn the money which will be paid them by accepting the full

responsibility for the Kaiser's trial and punishment. The League of Nations has no more soul than a limited company, and the opinion of posterity will not matter to it a jot. If it do right, it will speedily be forgotten. If it do wrong, nobody will cherish against it an increased hatred. But, whatever her politicians may say, Great Britain has no desire to accept the sole responsibility for an act of injustice; nor will she again, as the jailer of Europe, endure complacently the insults hurled at her by those whose collective policy she may be bidden to carry out.

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